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ABSTRACT

The interim report presents an evaluation of TADS (Technical Assistance Development System) through case studies of TADS technical assistance to the staffs of two demonstration programs for preschool handicapped children and their families. Purposes of the study included obtaining indepth descriptions of the technical assistance process to increase the general level of understanding of its nature and identify important variables which influence its effectiveness. The feasibility of the case study approach also was explored as a method for gathering such information. The report contains descriptions of the context in which the study took place and the sites and persons who were involved, of the development of the conceptual framework for the study, of the technical assistance as it occurred (the two cases), and a discussion of the findings from the cases, accompanied by suggestions for future efforts. Results are organized according to four major questions: (1) What client characteristics affect technical assistance? (2) What technical assistance provider characteristics affect the technical assistance? (3) What characteristics of the technical assistance events themselves influence the assistance? and (4) What are the outcomes, effects, and/or impacts of technical assistance? Significant client characteristics included leadership style, administrative autonomy, and communication practices. Influential provider characteristics included interpersonal and coordination skills, responsiveness, and knowledge of the project's purposes and goals. Factors of the technical assistance event judged as important were structure, communication, consultant/client match, involvement, and scheduling. Outcomes and impacts of technical assistance were identified in the areas of administration, staff, overall communication, focus of program activities, and program operation. Evaluation of the case study method indicated that the method is a useful way to learn about the technical assistance process. (DB)

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A Case Study of Technical Assistance to Demonstration Programs for Young Handicapped Children

Part I

by
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John R.B. Hawes, Jr.
Patricia Vandiviere
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TADS
chapel hill, nc
march 1981

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EC133553

A CASE STUDY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

PART I

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the Case Study Observers

Both the case study observers and the TADS staff agreed at the outset that this case study should be partly a learning experience. For us, this certainly has been true.

We began our learning through a review of the literature about case studies and technical assistance before our first involvement in the process that led to the information reported here. A number of writers influenced our thinking. Argyris (1976) identified a need for more detailed description of actual events in an intervention and a recognition of the complex interactions and feedback loops between consultants and their clients over the course of an intervention. Spencer and Cullen (1978) reported that the change-agent characteristics found in the literature can be summarized in five categories: demographic data, values and attitudes, job-related training or education, amount and type of work experience, and consulting experience. Plog (1978) suggested triangulation in data-collection for a case study--the more varied the people interviewed, the richer the study. Wolf (1977) said this sort of study should capture actual events in educational settings, and that the process must respond to people's concerns. He believes the participants must shape the direction of the inquiry, relating natural behaviors and expressions to the context in which they arise. Such a study is a dynamic inquiry process demanding extensive interaction between the evaluator and the participants.

Here, we acknowledge the insight of these and other writers, and we thank them for helping us form the approach for our work.

Our learning continued throughout the course of this study. There were frequent meetings (nine, all told) between the TADS staff members (as a group) and the observers, and a number of meetings with individual staff members.

We are grateful to all the talented people at TADS for their sharing, their support, and their patience: Tanya Suarez, Pat Trohanis, Tal Black, Mike Woodard, Jim Cox, and Sonya Prestridge gave unselfishly of their time and thinking; Elouise Jackson, Joan Anderson, and Ruth Meyer were responsive to our needs. Particularly, we want to recognize Pat Vandiviere who was charged with coordinating the study for TADS. Pat was the person we turned to most frequently for the guidance and help she supplied with unfailing good humor, professional competence, and personal charm.

Most of our learning took place at the project sites, and we want to acknowledge, once again with a grateful spirit, the voluntary willingness of all the people, whose identities and locations we agreed to disguise, to let us be a part of their programs for those many months. Our descriptions of their activities do not reveal the full extent of the positive and courteous manner of these good folks. You know who you are, and we thank you very much.

Finally, a check of our calendars revealed sixteen formal meetings between us, plus innumerable telephone calls. We learned a great deal from each other, and we value our new professional and personal relationship.

John R. B. Hawes, Jr. July 1980 Shirley K. Behr

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the TADS Evaluation Staff

Perhaps the most definite thing that we learned from this experience was that case studies require a great deal of time and effort on the part of many people. We feel particularly fortunate and appreciative that so many people gave so much to produce the information contained in this report.

The contents of the report directly reflect the competence, professionalism, and dedication of Shirley Behr and John Hawes, the case study observers. They undertook the task with a curiosity concerning case studies and enthusiasm for new experiences that motivated all who worked with them. They worked hard and diligently, questioning and examining their work as they went, and thereby setting standards that resulted in a product which would have, in ordinary circumstances, been the result of larger and longer efforts. They are the authors of the two case reports, and they collaborated on the writing of other sections of this document.

The report also reflects the professionalism and cooperation of the administrators and staff members from each project site. It is not an easy matter to be observed as one goes about his professional daily business, and even more difficult to have the results of that observation reported in black and white, through the writing skills, insight, and keen eyes of the two observers. All persons involved at the projects approached the case study with a good heart, gave us feedback on our work, informed us of our errors, and were a genuine pleasure to work with.

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Finally, all members of the TADS staff deserve our resounding thanks. They have supported this endeavor with their involvement, their energy, and their patience. Particular thanks go to the TADS technical assistance coordinators for each project, who also experienced the scrutiny of the observers. Their continued support and enthusiasm for the case, while being included in it, demonstrated their professionalism and encouraged more introspection by all of us.

The patient assistance of Pat Eichman and Joan O'Brien in the production of the report has made it a reality. They are true professionals.

Thanks to one and all.

Pat Vandiviere March 1981 Tanya M. Suarez

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

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In the following pages, the authors of this report have attempted to describe the development, conduct, and results of a case study of the technical assistance process. The process of interest was technical assistance as it is developed and exercised by the Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) and provided to the staffs of demonstration programs for preschool handicapped children and their families.

The impetus for conducting the case studies sprang from a desire to understand better the complex nature of technical assistance and to identify additional factors that influence its success. Throughout its years of operation, TADS has evolved a comprehensive set of processes for gathering information regarding its technical assistance. The results of the assistance are monitored continuously by the TADS staff through a series of carefully structured evaluation forms. These forms are completed by client participants and by technical assistance providers for each technical assistance activity. Summaries of the results have provided indicators of effectiveness relative to specific variables considered to be important to the success of technical assistance.

This survey-based evaluation methodology has been useful and informative but, by its nature, is restricted by the questions asked. TADS staff members and others have been interested in obtaining a more comprehensive portrait of the technical assistance process as it actually operates. Case study methodology, with its characteristic of providing in-depth descriptions of processes, has for some time been an inquiry method of interest for obtaining the information that TADS staff and others were seeking.

As early as 1974, TADS staff members conducted a study to determine

the feasibility of using case-like studies to gather information regarding technical assistance. Such studies were found to be feasible and to provide valuable information. The results also indicated that further development was required to overcome problems associated with sample size and selection, and the analysis and interpretation of resulting data (Gunn & Davis, 1974).

In 1976, Dr. James Gallagher, Director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center and one of the creators of TADS, expressed TADS' interest in the use of case studies, in addition to other methods, to provide information regarding the impacts of technical assistance. He stated,

> It [the case study] could delineate those program elements related to successful accomplishments in an individual program, so that the necessary conditions needed for successful completion of the program objectives might be identified. . . . Case studies can be used to discover the program elements associated with success. (Gallagher, 1976, pp. 80-81)

During the spring of 1977, TADS contracted with Dr. Ed Van Meter and associates, of Educational Administration Development Associates of Kansas City, to provide a thorough review of all of TADS' evaluation procedures. Five alternative approaches for evaluating TADS were suggested. Among these was a case study of selected client projects. Specifically, the alternative was described as requiring

> . . . the identification of a selected number of TADS client projects, and the subsequent subcontracting with a third party agency to conduct case studies of the selected projects for the specific purpose of identifying technical assistance impacts within the projects as a result of TADS services. (TADS Technical Assistance, 1977, p. 9)

On the basis of this recommendation and the growing interest of the TADS staff and others in this method, the organization contracted in 1978

with Greg Pennington, of Human Resource Consultants in Chapel Hill, North Carolina to conduct a review of the literature regarding the design and use of case studies. In his report, Pennington noted the importance of specifying the purpose of the case study and being cognizant of its attributes and limitations. He described the steps in conducting a case study and suggested, on the basis of the work of Spencer and Cullen (1978), that a TADS case study focus on the variables of: (a) the change agent, (b) the client, (c) the intervention process and intervention method, and (d) outcomes (Pennington, 1978).

In the spring of 1979, the decision was made to formally conduct two case studies simultaneously and describe the results as a supplement to the existing survey methods used to gather information about TADS' effectiveness. TADS' original plan and resources were designed to support the development of a one-year case study endeavor. The report presented here represents the product of that one-year plan.

Since that time, organizational and financial resources have been made available to support additional case study work. Therefore, the material presented here should be considered an interim report, with two more to follow; the second in the fall of 1981 and the third in the fall of 1982. Together, the three reports will present a complete view of the three-year development of technical assistance with the projects and will form the total TADS Technical Assistance Case Study Report.

The purposes of the case study were determined to be:

1. to obtain in-depth descriptions of the technical assistance process which could be used to

    a. increase the general level of understanding of its nature, and

b. identify important variables which influence its effectiveness

2. to explore further the feasibility of the case study approach as a method for gathering such information.

The case study results are provided in the remainder of this report.

Specifically, the report contains:

1. a description of the context in which the study took place and the sites and persons who were involved (Section II)

2. a description of the development of the conceptual framework for the study (Section III)

3. descriptions of the technical assistance as it occurred (the cases) (Section IV)

4. a discussion of the findings or "learnings" from the cases, accompanied by suggestions for future efforts (Sections V and VI).

SECTION II

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AND PERSONS INVOLVED

The context in which the study was conducted includes the technical assistance system (TADS) and its procedures, the recipients of TADS services, or clients, and the selected case study sites (Projects "Early Start" and "Co-Op"). The persons involved include the personnel involved in the technical assistance, the case study observers, and the members of the TADS staff.

The Technical Assistance System

The Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) was established in 1971 to assist in the development of the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP). Approved by Congress in 1968 and administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education, HCEEP provides grants to public and private nonprofit agencies for the development and implementation of model programs to demonstrate high-quality services for young handicapped children. TADS provides comprehensive and systematic support to HCEEP grantees through delivery of informational and consultative resources, called technical assistance.

Stedman (1976) described the technical assistance system as a communication network.

> Members initiate and maintain communication around specific problems and about strategies to solve the problems. . . . The structure and function of the system are partly determined by the content or information the system is appointed to deliver, partly by the characteristics of the "customers," or client organizations, and partly by the character and style of the technical assistance organization's membership. . . . The basic components of a TA system are . . . program planning and evaluation, information and media, organizational development, critical content areas, and resource development. (p. 3)

Lillie and Black (1976) extended this view. They described the

TADS system of technical assistance delivery as having five interlocking phases:

1. developing a program plan for each project
2. assessing needs of each project in relationship to its plan
3. developing a written agreement for technical assistance according to the project needs
4. delivering technical assistance through
   a. TADS-sponsored activities at the project site or in conference or workshop settings
   b. services to the project from the TADS office, or
   c. printed materials prepared by TADS
5. evaluating the effectiveness of the technical assistance.

TADS assists projects in managing their programs and accomplishing their goals more effectively through a broad range of systematic support and consultative services. Access to expertise not available locally, and to materials designed specifically for projects, is available through TADS. TADS also provides opportunities to increase collaboration and information-sharing among projects, and services are provided at no extra cost to projects. Project participation in technical assistance is encouraged but voluntary.

The Clients of the Technical Assistance System

The clients of TADS which are the subject of this case study are three-year demonstration projects for preschool handicapped children and their families. The projects are a component of HCEEP and are funded and administered by the U.S. Office of Special Education. Their purpose is to demonstrate and disseminate model services for preschool

handicapped children and their families. Because the projects operate under legislation and regulations governing HCEEP, they are similar in their overall purpose and the major areas to which their staffs devote their energies; e.g., developing model services for children and their families, increasing staff skills, demonstrating the model to others, and disseminating information about their program. The projects differ in areas such as year of funding, setting for services, theoretical and philosophical bases for services, and type and age of child served.

Selection of the Case Study Sites

Early in the development of the case study, it was decided to conduct comprehensive observations and interviews with the selected projects. Adequate resources were available to include two sites in the study. In order to obtain a portrait that would include descriptions of the introduction of technical assistance to a project, projects were selected which were in their first year of operation. In addition, projects were selected to permit observation of at least some variation in the delivery of technical assistance. Criteria for selection, therefore, included such factors as noticeable differences in staff, target population, and administrative location and structure. Other criteria were the agreement of the project's administrator to serve as a case study site and location of the project where travel expenses could be kept to a minimum.

Because the purpose of the study was to describe the technical assistance process, and not the overall development of the client projects, it was decided at the outset that the location and personnel

of the projects would be kept confidential. This stance was taken to protect the clients and to encourage their participation and information-sharing. It was also taken to limit biases in the interpretation of results which might occur if actual locations and participants were known. Precise descriptions of sites, created to disguise their location but not their purpose and structure, are given in Section IV. The sites are known to us as "Project Early Start" and "Project Co-Op."

Persons Involved in the Technical Assistance

The focus of technical assistance, and therefore of the case study observations, is on program development and the persons who make it happen. Personnel involved in program development at project sites include the project director, the project coordinator, members of the program staff, and others at the site who participate in, influence, or administer the project. Personnel involved in program development from the technical assistance agency include the entire TADS staff, to some degree, and more specifically the technical assistance coordinator who is assigned to the project, and the persons on the TADS staff or contracted by TADS to provide the technical assistance (technical assistance providers).

For the purpose of this case study, the actual names and the personal and professional characteristics of the persons who participated in technical assistance at the selected case study sites remain confidential. A list of the participants in the technical assistance, using fictitious names, is provided at the beginning of each case description (see Section IV).

Selection of the Case Study Observers

Reviews of the literature and existing case studies demonstrated the critical importance of the observers to the quality of observations and subsequent development of the case. Such studies suggested that observers are needed who are knowledgeable of organizations and the roles of the people in them, and are sensitive to personal interactions and changes. In addition, observers must be keenly perceptive and able to translate their perceptions into comprehensive, clear, and meaningful descriptions.

For these reasons, TADS contracted with Shirley K. Behr and John R. B. Hawes, Jr. to assist in developing the case study and to conduct the observations. At the time, Shirley Behr was a Bush Policy Fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, and had professional experiences which were believed to be valuable to the case study. She had spent a major portion of her career in the area of early childhood special education, the program area of TADS' client projects. She had been the creator and director of a well-known early childhood special education project, and had a working knowledge of project development and operation. John Hawes, a consultant in a research firm, had extensive experience in program development and administration. He had worked in leadership positions in public schools and had directed a state institute responsible for statewide program design, development, and implementation. He had additional areas of interest and experience in both community and adult education, fields from which many of the approaches used in technical assistance were drawn.

Both case study observers had experience as consultants to developing programs and had directed programs in which they had demonstrated personal and political skills. Their accomplishments suggested a level of competence that would strongly enhance the case study.

The TADS Staff

Developing, directing, and producing the case study were the responsibility of the evaluation staff at TADS, under the direction of Tanya Suarez, Associate Director of TADS for Evaluation. Pat Vandiviere, the Program Evaluation Specialist, had responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the case study. Much of the planning for the study was conducted by the observers and what was called the "TADS Case Study Staff." This group consisted of Tanya Suarez, Pat Vandiviere, Pat Trohanis (Director of TADS), Tal Black (Associate Director of TADS for Demonstration Projects), and the two technical assistance coordinators (known in the case studies as Jay Arbey and Carol Turner) who were responsible for the technical assistance to the case study projects. Other meetings and discussions regarding the case study were held with the entire TADS professional staff.

SECTION III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE STUDY

In his report on the use of case studies, Pennington (1978) emphasized the importance of determining, at the outset, the specific purpose of a case study and of outlining the theoretical framework surrounding it. Adhering to these principles, the two observers for this study devoted much of their effort during the early weeks to developing a conceptual framework for the case study design. The framework and the process by which it was developed are described here.

The development of the framework was a five-stage procedure. The first stage was the definition of information needs--the questions to be asked during the case study. Identification of the problem to be addressed was the second stage. The third stage was construction of a technical assistance event observation design. Fourth was the initial on-site project observation, and the fifth stage was preparation of a statement outlining the observers' conceptual framework for the case study. A flow chart of activities and a schedule were created to guide the development of the framework. They are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

Stage I: Definition of Information Needs and Study Questions

The first task was to review the literature about case studies and about technical assistance. Although the search was not exhaustive, it did reveal a number of helpful materials concerning both the case study process and technical assistance in general. (A brief summary of the literature search is included in the observers' acknowledgements.) This background enabled the observers to identify a variety of issues related to this particular case study which required discussion and resolution before a design could be completed. Among the issues were:

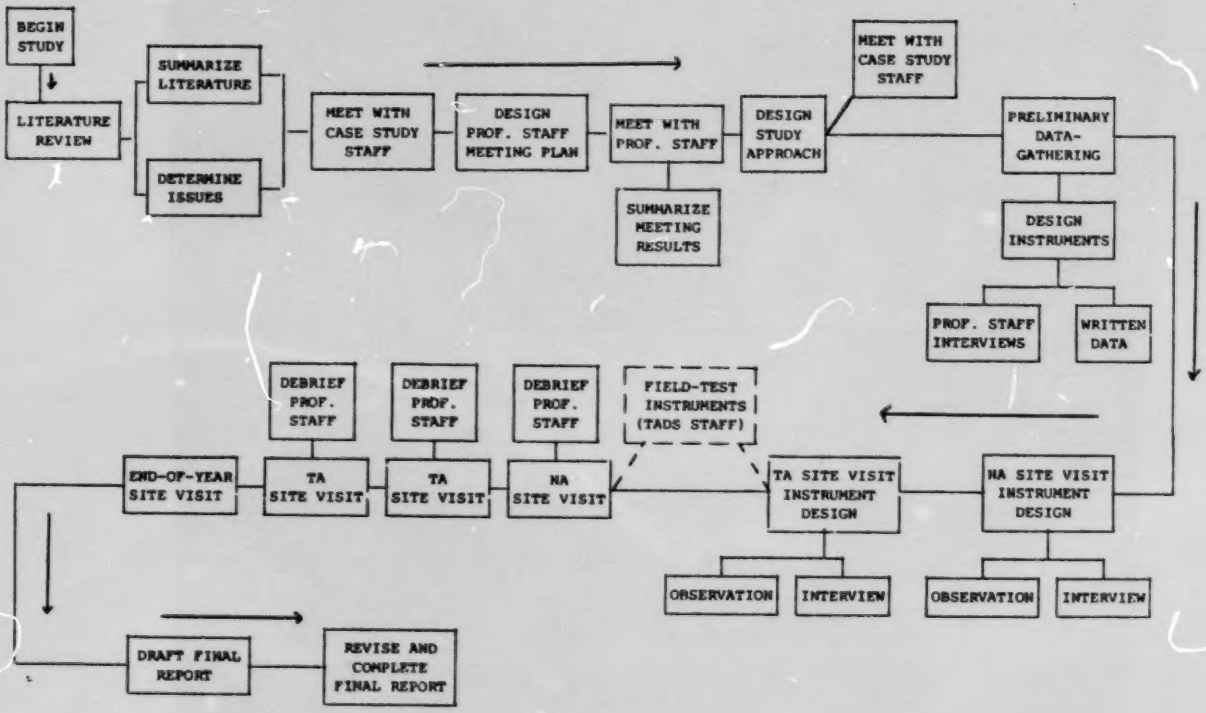

Figure 1. Observers' operational flow chart for Year 1 of the case study project.

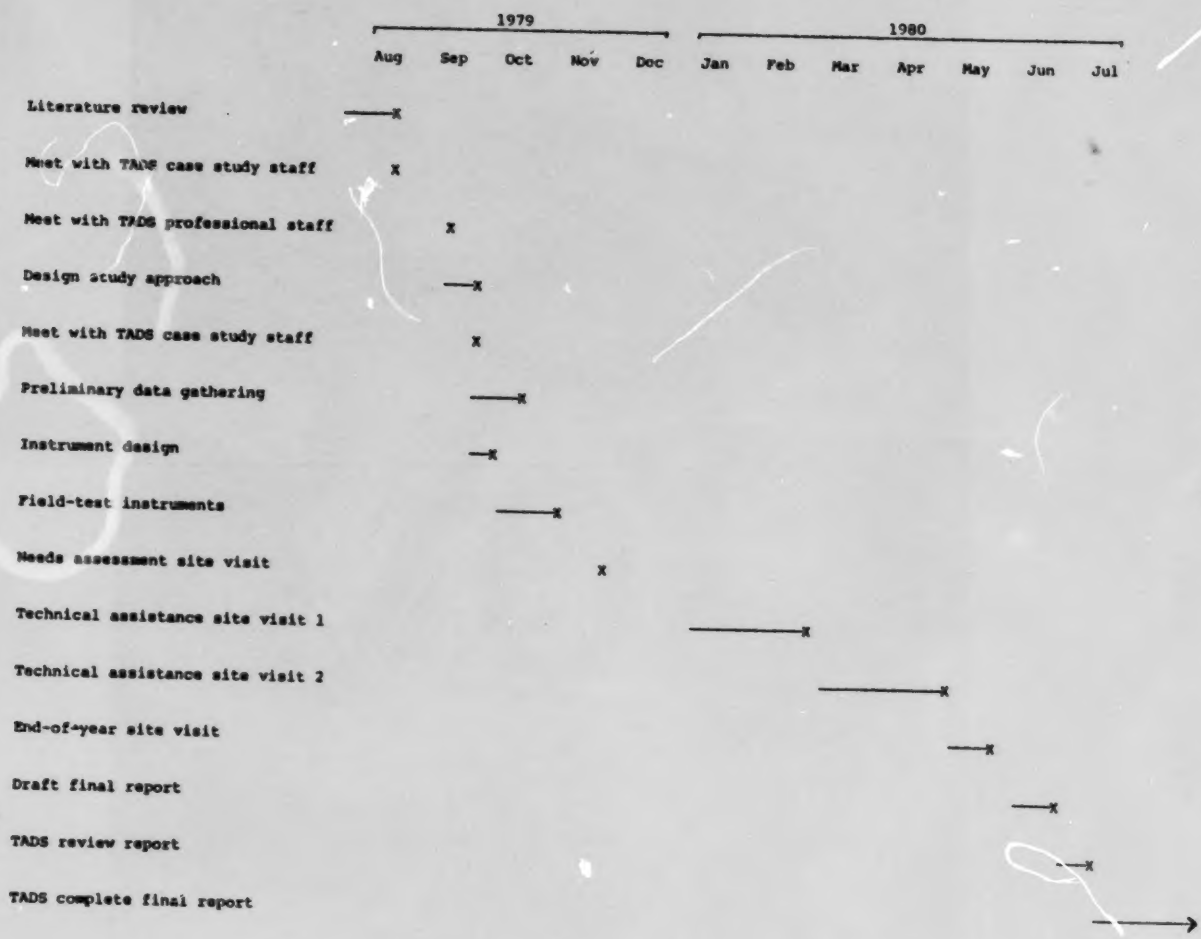

Figure 2. Case study planning milestones: August 1979 to July 1980.

1. the nature of the audience for the case study
2. development of confidentiality procedures
3. access to providers and recipients of technical assistance
4. the broad categories of data to be collected.

A meeting was held with the TADS case study staff to resolve these and other issues, to review and confirm the purpose of the study, and to develop an agenda for a meeting with the entire TADS staff.

The first audience for the case study was the TADS staff, who would provide periodic feedback during the year. In addition, a major audience for the completed case study report was to be the TADS funding agency, the Office of Special Education. Other audiences to whom the study was directed included TADS' colleagues at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, the administrators and staff members of the case study projects, and other professionals interested or involved in technical assistance.

Preserving confidentiality was of prime concern. The project sites and staff were disguised, consultants were disguised and were asked to keep the case study aspect of their work confidential, and the projects themselves were asked to preserve confidentiality concerning their participation in the study. TADS staff members were to discuss the case study only with the observers, the consultants, and the project staff.

Provisions were made with TADS, the projects, and the technical assistance providers for the observers to have ready access to all persons and activities involved in technical assistance to the projects.

Data to be collected were determined to be, at a minimum, observations, interviews, correspondence, and records of contacts.

During their meeting with the entire TADS staff, the observers presented an overview of their literature review, outlined the issues raised with the TADS case study staff and their resolution, and discussed with staff members their questions, concerns, and thoughts about the study. The observers noted that the problem addressed by the case study could be defined simply as the need to gather and interpret specific information about the technical assistance process. To determine what specific information was needed, the staff were asked to formulate questions and concerns that they, as individual professionals, wished to have addressed about the process. The responses (supplemented by similar questions which had been raised previously by TADS Advisory Committee members in 1978-79) yielded 58 separate items. Four basic questions subsequently were developed for investigation during the first year of the study. They were:

1. What client characteristics affect technical assistance?

   (e.g., environmental or system characteristics, problems or needs of clients, roles, responsibilities and characteristics of the direct recipients of technical assistance)

2. What technical assistance provider characteristics affect technical assistance?

   (e.g., skills, competencies, roles taken during technical assistance, values/personality characteristics)

3. What characteristics of the technical assistance event(s) themselves influence the technical assistance?

   (e.g., type, consistency, amount and degree of client involvement, degree of personal contact, phase of intervention)

4. What are the outcomes, effects, and/or impacts of technical assistance?

Stage II: Identification of the Problem

Through analysis of the questions and concerns raised by TADS staff and Advisory Committee, the investigators identified two distinct types of information needs:

1. descriptive information about events related to preparing for and implementing technical assistance

   (e.g., how projects prepare for technical assistance, how many contacts and interactions occur between TADS and projects, how projects use publications and written materials provided by TADS)

2. qualitative information about characteristics of the individuals providing and receiving technical assistance, and how these characteristics affect the technical assistance process and its outcomes

   (e.g., skills, competencies, values, personalities, perceptions, expectations, interactions, approaches, receptivity, and the resulting organizational dynamics)

Many descriptive information needs could be met by means of interviews, questionnaires, records of events, and so forth. The qualitative information needs, however, required more subtle and abstract examination.

The relationship between the two types of needs represented the underlying problem to be addressed by the study. The problem can be illustrated graphically as a partial eclipse (see Figure 3). Answers to questions about technical assistance events and activities are obscured somewhat by the pervasive qualities of the personal characteristics of individuals involved in technical assistance. To describe or understand technical assistance as a total process, the case study would be designed to focus on the individual characteristics found in qualitative information needs and to describe how those characteristics related to the technical assistance events found in descriptive information needs.

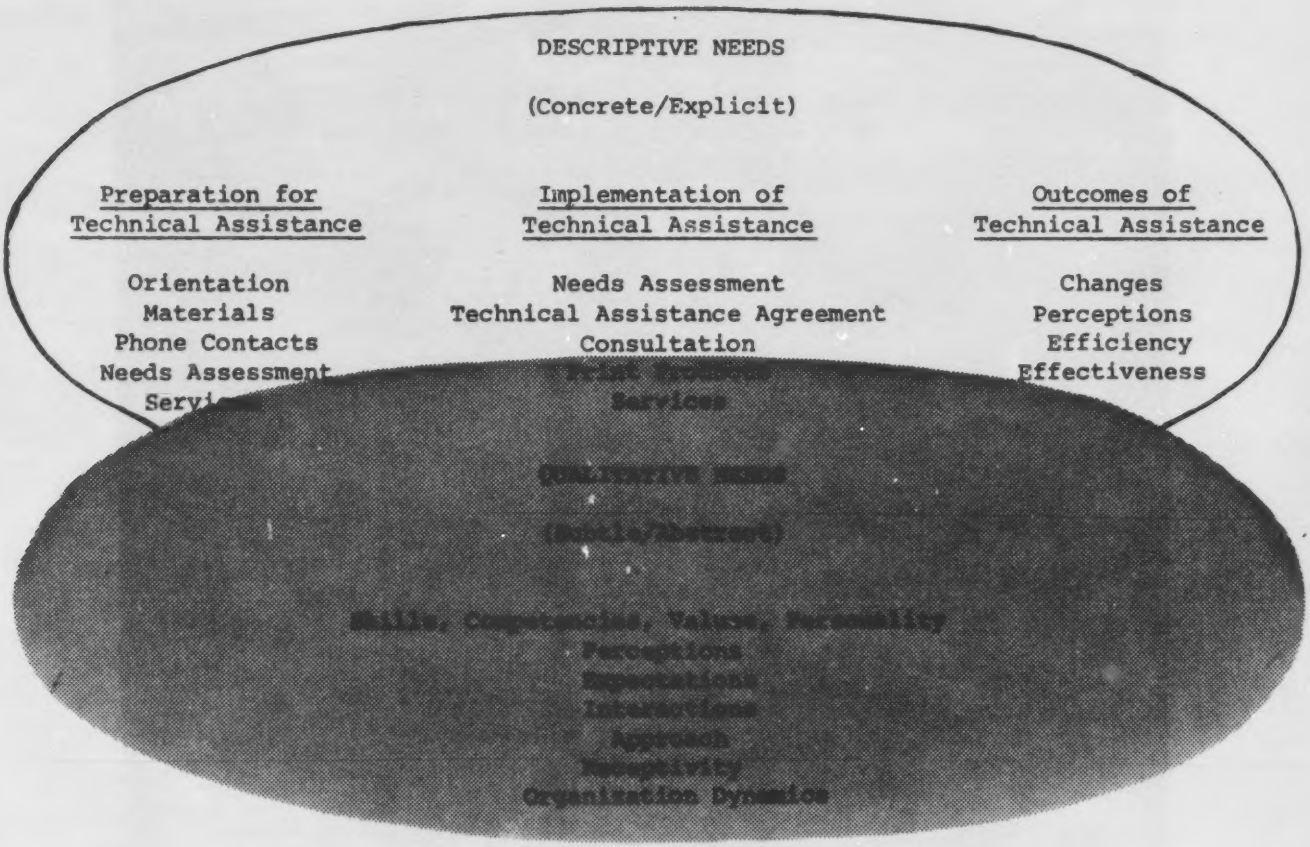

Figure 3. Information needs about technical assistance. Descriptive needs are partially eclipsed by qualitative needs.

Stage III: Construction of Technical Assistance Event Observation Design

Having specified more precisely the questions and problem to be addressed by the case study, the investigators moved to the third stage which began with two information-gathering procedures. A structured formal interview was conducted with the TADS technical assistance coordinators who were assigned to the two HCEEP case study projects. The purpose of the interview was to determine the level of information that each coordinator had about the projects and to obtain their perceptions of project needs, problems, and internal organization.

The second information-gathering procedure was an informal set of questions asked by the TADS professional staff. The purpose of these questions was to allow staff members to share their personal opinions and concerns. It was assumed that each had ideas about what was happening during the technical assistance process, based uniquely on their own experiences.

The information provided by the interviews and questions was used by the investigators in constructing on-site observation guides and preparing a schedule for their use, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Because the initial on-site technical assistance event, the needs assessment, has a predetermined function and format, interview items and observation guides for this activity differed somewhat from those used for other technical assistance events. In both cases, however, the interview and observation formats had as their focus the characteristics of the individuals involved and how those characteristics affected the technical assistance events.

Information-Gathering Procedure	Schedule for Use
Preliminary interview with project administrator	Prior to technical assistance event
Preliminary interview with technical assistance provider	Prior to technical assistance event
Use of observation guide for technical assistance event	Throughout technical assistance event
Debriefing interview with project administrator	Immediately following technical assistance event
Debriefing interview with technical assistance provider	Immediately following technical assistance event

Figure 4. Information-gathering procedures and schedule for use.

As might be expected, at this point in the process the observers had formulated some fairly firm notions about the conceptual framework for the study. The framework was to remain tentative, however, pending modifications resulting from the information and impressions the observers would obtain during their first visits to the project sites (Stage IV).

Stage IV: On-Site Project Observations

Initial site visits were planned to coincide with the first on-site technical assistance event, the needs assessment. This event was conducted at each site in November 1979. Scheduling the observers' visits at this time enabled them to obtain important information for completing the conceptual framework for the study. It also afforded the opportunity to gather data and observations about the needs assessment, which is generally agreed to be a crucial event in the technical assistance process.

Stage V: Final Statement of Observers' Conceptual Framework

After completing their observations of the two projects' needs assessments, the observers shared the results with each other and with TADS professional staff members. This review led to the fifth and final stage in the development of the conceptual framework for the case study, the preparation of a final statement:

The purpose of the study is to meet certain information needs required by TADS. The goal is to describe technical assistance as a total process by illustrating the dynamics that occur during specific technical assistance events. The unit of study, then, is neither the provider of technical assistance (TADS) nor the client of technical assistance (HCEEP projects), but, rather, the technical assistance process occurring as the result of the interaction between the provider organization and the client organization.

Information needs have resulted because certain characteristics of the clients (project sites) have remained obscure. To reveal these characteristics and their relationship to the outcomes of technical assistance more fully, the process must be examined at the project site over a period of time and with data received from several sources. The examination includes viewing the project as it relates to its parent organization, the project as it relates to itself, and the project as it relates to TADS.

The sources of data include input from the technical assistance provider, information from the technical assistance clients (two first-year HCEEP projects), and observations throughout the course of the case study.

The client characteristics important to the case study can be described along three dimensions: organizational dynamics; competencies and experience of personnel; and, participant expectations.

> Organizational dynamics includes the project's parent organization and refers to decision-making procedures and the roles and responsibilities of individuals within that organization.
>
> Competencies and experience of personnel include leadership style of the project director/coordinator, the expertise of the project staff, and the leadership development needs of the project administrators.
>
> Participant expectations are the anticipated outcomes of the technical assistance process from the client point of view as expressed by both the project staff and the technical assistance personnel.

To arrive at the three-dimensional view outlined above, it is necessary to examine how the project is organized, the style of project leadership, the skills and competencies of the project staff, the skills and competencies of the technical assistance providers, and the roles played by the funding source (Office of Special Education, formerly Bureau of Education for the Handicapped), the technical assistance needs assessor, technical assistance consultants, and TADS staff.

It should be noted that the conceptual framework outlined above, and the processes involved in its development, were designed specifically for the TADS Technical Assistance Case Study project. To be appropriate for case studies of other technical assistance delivery systems, some modification may be required. Further, it should be remembered that the study conducted within this framework was limited to technical assistance as it was delivered to two first-year project sites. It may not be reasonable, therefore, to attempt to generalize the results to technical assistance as it is delivered to HCEEP projects over their three-year demonstration period.

With these cautions in mind, the reader is invited to continue through the report.

SECTION IV

THE CASES: PROJECT EARLY START AND PROJECT CO-OP

INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of this case study was to meet certain information needs by examining and describing the technical assistance delivery process as it occurs. The case study observers were present as a variety of direct technical assistance services were provided to two projects. Their observations took place in different locations over a five-month period. Interactions observed between individuals and within groups during these events were documented carefully. Structured personal interviews with project staff members, consultants, and TADS technical assistance coordinators provided additional information about their perceptions and reactions.

In an effort to describe more clearly the settings, individuals, events, and interactions, a story-telling approach was used to present the observations. This approach invites the reader to develop personal reactions, insights, questions, and conclusions about what took place during the technical assistance events. The stories are based on information documented during multiple observations. The interview responses of project managers and staff, technical assistance providers, and TADS technical assistance coordinators have been integrated into the stories. Fictitious names and places have been used to protect the anonymity of project settings and individuals. The stories are designed to guide the reader through various technical assistance events as they occurred; however, adjustments in other details have been made to create interest and continuity as well as to protect confidentiality.

The two parts of this section describe the technical assistance

delivery process at two case study sites, "Project Early Start" and "Project Co-Op." The needs assessment was the first on-site technical assistance provided to the case study projects by TADS. It took place for two consecutive days at each site. The needs assessment is a formally structured, instrument-based process for both the consultants (needs assessors) and the project staff participants, and it is a major technical assistance event. The technical assistance agreement, which defines the specific types of technical assistance that a project will receive from TADS during the year, is an outcome of the needs assessment. (A copy of the needs assessment instrument, entitled "HCEEP Demonstration Project Profile," and a copy of the technical assistance agreement form may be obtained from TADS.)

Three types of direct technical assistance are illustrated in this section, including an on-site consultation, a small group consultation, and an off-site consultation. On-site consultation refers to technical assistance that is provided by a consultant selected to work at the project location. Small group consultations are attended by project personnel representing from four to eight projects who have requested technical assistance in the area of the workshop topic. Off-site consultation refers to consultation or training in a community other than the one where the project is located. (In this case, the off-site consultation was not observed; it is reported through retrospective interviews.)

Two different writing styles may be noted in the reports of the two projects. Each is a function of the observer's personal style, and each has been retained to emphasize the unique set of circumstances and

interactions of individual projects and situations. Although there were many differences between the two case study sites, there were also significant similarities with regard to the technical assistance issues that emerged. They are discussed in the final section of this report.

At this point it is important to state some of the things that can and cannot be expected of these cases, and to reiterate information concerning the time frame for the study. This report concerns the TADS technical assistance process as it occurred during the first year of operation of two HCEEP projects. It can reasonably be assumed that during a second year most projects view their technical assistance requirements in a different light, based upon their experience. The same can be said for a third year of operation. Similarly, the nature of the delivery process can be expected to change along with the project's evolution. For this reason, the reader should keep in mind that the information provided here concerns projects that were just being put together and beginning to develop their plans and services for preschool handicapped children and their families. Likewise, the projects were experiencing their first contacts with TADS, and TADS with them. This report, therefore, unlike the two that will follow, describes beginnings.

CASE #1: PROJECT EARLY START

Participants

(in order of their appearance in the case description)

George . . . . . Needs Assessor

Bud Fisher . . . . . Project Coordinator

Matt Ellis . . . . . Project Director and Assistant Principal

Carol Turner . . . . . TADS Technical Assistance Coordinator

Betsy and Cynthia . . . . . Project Teachers

Phil . . . . . Social Worker

Helen . . . . . Nurse

Harry . . . . . Speech Pathologist

Gloria . . . . . Psychologist

Jeff . . . . . Physical Therapist

Walter Fox . . . . . Director of Special Education

Bill Roland . . . . . School Superintendent

Steve Winston . . . . . Project Officer, Office of Special Education

Sally Johnson . . . . . Evaluation Consultant

Roger Pearson . . . . . Staff Development Consultant

Henry Hobbs . . . . . TADS Staff Member

Jim . . . . . Case Study Observer

Prologue

His cab pulled up at the project site, a large private school for children with special needs, after a 45-minute drive through the crisp autumn air in early morning traffic. George was pleased to have a little extra time, since he was 20 minutes early for his appointment. After paying the cab driver, he stood a moment and admired the modern design of the school's new facility. A TADS needs assessor for three years, George enjoyed working with demonstration project staff; it was exciting to be part of their efforts in developing creative programs. As he walked toward the front entrance of the school, he wondered if he'd have time for a leisurely dinner. Probably not, he thought, recalling the demanding schedule of the first day on a needs assessment.

The receptionist invited George to relax on one of the comfortable chairs near her desk while he waited for Bud Fisher, the project coordinator. George took off his coat, sat down, and put his briefcase on his lap. There was just enough time for a mental review of the project and his schedule for the next two days--something he had had little time to do since he had accepted this assignment. George had read Project Early Start's grant proposal several weeks earlier and had been impressed with their program design for severely handicapped young children.

As he recalled his phone conversation with Bud Fisher, George thought how eager Bud had sounded about meeting with him and working on the needs assessment. Before Bud became project coordinator five months ago, he had been a special education teacher at the school. Bud had told George how surprised and happy he was when Bill Roland, the school superintendent, offered him the job of project coordinator. George

couldn't help admiring Bud's enthusiasm about his job and the project. He had been interested to hear from Bud about the school's recent administrative changes. Walter Fox, who, as assistant principal, had created the project proposal, had been promoted to director of special education, and a new person had been hired to take his previous job. The new assistant principal, Matt Ellis, had been given responsibility for directing the project, although George had the impression from his conversation with Bud that this was not a major part of the assistant principal's duties. In the administrative structure of the school, Walter and Matt held positions at equal levels.

Glancing at his watch, George noted that he still had 10 minutes to wait. His thoughts drifted to TADS and focused on Carol Turner, the technical assistance coordinator assigned to Project Early Start. Carol had reviewed the project with George on the phone, when she called to confirm the details of the needs assessment. She had talked with Bud Fisher in August at an orientation conference for directors of new HCEEP projects and she, too, had been impressed with Bud's enthusiasm. (Although the project proposal listed Walter Fox as project director, Walter had told Carol that Bud was the person with whom she should communicate, and Bud had attended the conference for project directors.) Carol had read Project Early Start's proposal and thought the project had a solid rationale, a good program evaluation plan, and a potentially effective parent program. She had suggested to George that the project's technical assistance needs probably would focus on staff development, because Bud had highlighted that area during their conversation at the orientation conference. Carol also thought some of

her professional strengths in the areas of program evaluation, parent education, and cost analysis might be helpful to this project.

George knew that TADS technical assistance coordinators were responsible for coordinating and monitoring technical assistance to a number of projects, and he admired their ability to work with so many projects and individuals and with such a vast array of technical assistance resources. The expanding number of HCEEP demonstration projects had placed additional demands on their time, and hiring outside consultants like himself was a way to accomplish these tehcnical assistance events. TADS coordinators rarely had the opportunity to visit projects; almost all of their contacts were by phone. George had found Carol to be particularly sensitive to the types of needs identified by projects and to how quickly TADS and the projects could work toward meeting those needs. She tried to make certain that the projects understood TADS' desire to be flexible and helpful by establishing positive and productive relationships with them and the project directors. Carol believed it was important to follow up on decisions that were made by putting them in writing. She also believed it was important to allow projects to make their own decisions and to be supportive of their positive accomplishments. It was rewarding to Carol when technical assistance met a project's needs and she was able to see the products developed by the project. It became a problem when the consultants or projects failed to follow through, meet deadlines, or keep her informed about what was happening. Some of the ways Carol measured the success of technical assistance were the degree of agreement between projects and consultants on what technical assistance had accomplished, the number

of evaluation reports that were completed, and the results reported on the end-of-year surveys.

George thought how helpful it was to have Carol's views on technical assistance before he began the needs assessment, for the completion of his work would mark the beginning of Carol's major task with Project Early Start. It would be up to Carol to review the technical assistance needs, participate in finalizing the technical assistance agreement, select the consultants, send them materials, and complete the myriad arrangements and paper work associated with each technical assistance event. George had told Carol he would call her at the end of the year to find out how things had gone. His personal rewards as a needs assessor would come from knowing that the needs assessment and technical assistance agreement met project expectations, and that the requested technical assistance was provided successfully.

Someone called George's name, and he looked up to see Bud Fisher, a tall, smiling young man in his late twenties. George picked up his coat and briefcase and walked with Bud through the school to the conference room where they would be meeting for the next two days. As they passed the classrooms, Bud explained the various programs, telling George he hoped there would be time later for a more complete tour of the school.

The Needs Assessment

Morning Session

The carpeted conference room had a large table in the center and big windows facing the street. It was a cheerful room, and George was grateful that Bud had selected such a comfortable environment for their work. A pot of coffee was perking on a small table in a corner, and copies of the day's agenda were placed on the conference table in front of the chairs pulled to it. As Bud poured their coffee, he said that Matt Ellis, the new assistant principal and project director, would be joining them shortly to participate in reviewing the administrative items on the needs assessment instrument. Bud explained that Matt might not be able to spend the entire day with them. Most of the items on the administrative review section already had been rated by Bud, because Matt had so little time and was still unfamiliar with many of the details. In a few minutes Matt came in, introduced himself to George, nodded to Bud, sat down at the head of the table, and lit a cigarette. Without wasting any time, Matt said he felt personally responsible for the project but had not yet been able to give it his full attention. George listened attentively as Matt described some of the problems he had with his other job responsibilities.

They began the administrative review with George reading each item of the instrument aloud, along with the ratings assigned by Bud. The first few items went smoothly; many of the program planning tasks had been partially completed. When they came to the section on personnel, Matt said he considered this to be his responsibility and he planned to give it his attention. As the review progressed, Matt asked George to

clarify the meaning of many items. Matt also disagreed with Bud's ratings on some occasions. For example, Bud had rated transportation as an area that still needed to be planned; Matt disagreed, saying there was a plan for transportation although budgetary problems had prevented the purchase of the necessary vehicle. When Matt disagreed with a rating, he tried to elicit George's opinion. In an effort to draw Bud into the discussions, George asked Bud his reasons for the rating in question. When Bud was confident, he had no difficulty defending his ratings, but some items presented a problem. Bud was aware that some tasks were pending, but was unsure whether it was his responsibility or Matt's to make necessary decisions. George expressed some concern about the need for clarifying the decision-making process, and offered his help in this area over the next two days. The tension he had noted began to diminish, and Matt and Bud jointly assured George that several items would be completed on time.

They hadn't quite finished the administrative review when the members of the project staff arrived at 9:45. George listened attentively as Bud welcomed them. The staff members introduced themselves and described their positions and working relationships with Bud, Matt, and Walter Fox, the director of special education. Betsy and Cynthia, the full-time project teachers, worked in the classroom as a team, under Bud's supervision. Phil, the social worker, worked half-time with the parents of children in the project; the balance of his time was spent in other school programs under Walter Fox's supervision. Helen, the project nurse, worked with the children's parents; because she was a clinician, she also worked under Walter's direction. Harry,

a speech pathologist, worked full-time on other school programs under Walter's supervision, but since the project had funds for consultants, Harry was available to them for speech consultation. The same was true for Gloria, the school psychologist. Jeff, the physical therapist, worked part-time on the project but spent the major portion of his time on other school programs under Walter's supervision.

When the introductions were over, George presented a brief review of the needs assessment instrument, explained his role as needs assessor, and presented the day's agenda. In the informal discussion that followed, George played the role of a learner, encouraging staff to tell him about their project work. At first, responses were slow in coming. When someone did share information, George responded with genuine interest and asked questions. As the group became more comfortable, several members talked and commented spontaneously. George was aware of Matt's departure but kept his eyes and attention focused on Betsy, who was telling him about materials she found useful in the classroom.

When the discussion began to flow, George switched his role from learner to one of trainer and consultant. He stressed the importance of staff's agreeing on a philosophic approach to working with the children and their parents. This led comfortably into the next portion of the needs assessment instrument--the conceptualization of services for children. Betsy, Cynthia, Phil, and Helen had reviewed the needs assessment instrument the week before, and had had difficulty understanding and rating several items. They had been working with children and parents in the project for three months and were not entirely comfortable about what they were doing. All were formally trained in their professions, but had

never worked with severely disabled children before. Bud supported their comments and their need for reassurance. George suggested some relevant reading materials and discussed several ways to do a task analysis for the children's activities. He offered positive reinforcement, and took time to note the project's opportunities to provide important information to the field.

They were interrupted by the loud cries of a young child. Cynthia excused herself from the room while Bud explained that the cries were from one of the children in the project classroom a few feet away. The staff had decided not to cancel classes for the two days of the needs assessment. Instead, they had hired substitute teachers. Phil pointed out the importance of not making changes in the children's schedule because it could be disappointing and discouraging to the parents. When Cynthia returned, she assured them that the child was all right but thought they had better keep an eye on things.

As they continued their discussion, Bud pointed out that the project had changed a procedure from that outlined in the proposal. George asked Bud if he had informed the project officer at the Office of Special Education of this change, and Bud said he hadn't realized that was necessary. George said it was important for the project officer to know of such changes. Farther along in the discussion, Betsy and Cynthia expressed concern about managing in the classroom when they had a full caseload of children. Phil and Helen were sympathetic to the teachers' concern, although a full caseload would not affect them personally since most of their work was done with the parents at home and they had more mobility than the teachers did.

Glancing at his watch, George found that they hadn't completed all of the items he had hoped to finish by this time. Still, he was satisfied with the way things were progressing. It was important that the staff feel comfortable with him, with each other, and with the needs assessment process. George, too, needed time to observe staff interactions with each other and with Bud. Bud rarely was decisive or authoritarian; he invited staff input and consensus on almost all items. Bud's leadership style enabled George to create a safe environment in which staff could express concerns and opinions.

They were finishing the items on the morning's agenda when a man, later identified as Walter Fox, entered the room, walked to where Bud was sitting, and leaned down to talk to him. Bud then got up and followed Walter out of the room. Betsy and Cynthia left at 11:30 to check on the children, saying they would see George again after lunch. Helen and Phil needed to spend a few minutes with parents who had arrived in the classroom, and told George they would return for the afternoon meeting. Harry, Gloria, and Jeff also had to leave; they said their other duties might prevent their attending the afternoon session. When Bud returned, he apologized for the interruption and said he was ready to go to lunch with George.

Interlude

As they walked toward the restaurant, Bud asked George how he thought the morning session had gone. George expressed his appreciation for the considerate physical arrangements and for having the entire staff participate in the meeting. He reminded Bud that several items

of the administrative review were not completed, and suggested they discuss them now. He asked about the project's organizational structure. Bud explained it was not yet on paper, even though there was a written plan for the rest of the school. George said this should be done for the project as soon as possible; the organizational chart was an important administrative tool that delineated who reported to whom and clarified issues for the entire staff. He also stressed the importance of documenting project activities as they went along.

After their orders were taken at the restaurant, George asked Bud to describe how he felt things were going in the project. Bud was eager to talk about the project, and he spent the next hour sharing his feelings and concerns. During the orientation conference for new HCEEP projects, Bud had met with Carol Turner of TADS and with Steve Winston, his project officer from the Office of Special Education. He had expected some feedback on the quality of the project proposal during that meeting. Carol had read the proposal but Steve had not, and Bud's questions still were unanswered. This disappointed him. He still wasn't sure what to expect from Carol, since he had had no previous experience with technical assistance. He knew he could call Carol for emergency help, but there had been no occasion for that. Although his experience was limited, Bud believed the lines of communication were open with Carol and TADS. During the orientation he had been told that one of the best sources of information was other HCEEP projects. He had already contacted several to ask for information and materials.

Bud talked next about the needs assessment, which he and the staff hoped would provide practical feedback on what they were doing and

whether they were doing it well. They also hoped it would help them focus on where they were going and what they should be doing. Bud did not expect these two days to be easy; there might be differences of opinion among staff, and staff might not understand what was happening or where they fit in. There could be conflicts in role relationships. But his worst fear was discovering that staff were not as happy as he thought they were, and that they would use the needs assessment process to vent previously unexpressed anger or frustration. Still, preparing for the needs assessment had been a good learning experience. The staff seemed to be thinking along new lines. In spite of all the work, the preparation had stimulated good discussion and forced them to look at the project in its totality.

Two issues of major concern to Bud had to do with administrative and budgetary matters. Recent school administrative changes had resulted in Bud's having a supervisor (Matt Ellis) and two other administrators with interest in the project: Walter Fox, director of special education, and Bill Roland, school superintendent. Matt devoted almost no time to the project, and it was difficult to get feedback from him. Bud had had little communication with or from Bill Roland and was unsure of what his relationship should be with the superintendent's office. Although Walter Fox had no formal responsibility for the project, Bud felt more comfortable going to him with problems. Bud knew his decisions could be overturned by others, and he knew he did not have the final say about the project. He was responsible for hiring and supervising project teachers, but Walter supervised the clinical staff. The project's budget was developed by Walter Fox, and Bud needed to learn

how to make necessary changes. At present, he felt he had little control over the budget. He was keeping a personal record of all project expenses for his own information.

Bud's leadership role in the project was a new experience for him. He was comfortable with the staff, and believed he had the ability to listen and give fair and equal treatment. He leaned heavily on his teaching skills. He did not think he was dictatorial, and he expressed a high level of trust in the staff. Perhaps he could be more forceful at times, but he was sensitive about alienating people. Bud felt an underlying staff assumption that he had all the necessary skills because he was the project coordinator. He hoped that time and experience would help him develop additional skills in project leadership.

Toward the end of their lunch hour, Bud turned the discussion to the project's most important technical assistance needs. He wasn't sure that the project had program evaluation needs, and he wondered if TADS thought the Early Start evaluation plan was adequate. He hoped to get some good ideas about staff development and some technical assistance in conducting a needs assessment among staff. He wanted TADS' help in finding and meeting with staffs of projects working with similar kinds of children. Bud believed all of the project staff had the basic skills and positive attitudes they needed to work effectively with the children and their parents. Betsy and Cynthia, however, had had little previous experience in working with severely disabled children, and they had many questions about appropriate programming; they particularly needed help in developing individual educational plans and budgeting their time. Phil's social work degree was recent, and he still had a

lot to learn. Helen was a competent nurse, but she needed to acquire some additional assessment skills.

George appreciated Bud's open sharing. He felt that a consultant needed to be a supportive listener as well as having the ability to create an open atmosphere in which honest discussion could take place, and it was gratifying to have been successful to this point. On their walk back to school, George and Bud discussed the qualities that were important for technical assistance coordinators and consultants to have. Bud thought technical assistance coordinators needed to know about a project's proposal and about available resources. Honesty, good interpersonal skills, and being a good listener were also important. Consultants should be receptive to the program, integrating information to fit program needs and modifying their approach accordingly. Bud said he hoped their technical assistance would help staff look at the project as a whole and understand how their individual roles related to the total program. He believed this would improve staff utilization and would lead to less fragmentation and more shared responsibility.

Afternoon Meeting

It was 1:15 when George and Bud returned to the conference room to find Betsy, Cynthia, Phil, and Helen seated at the table. Everyone seemed to be more relaxed this afternoon. George directed their attention to the section of the needs assessment instrument concerning the parent program, and he focused on the need to put their philosophy of the program in writing. He asked Phil to describe what took place when a new child was referred to the project. After Phil outlined the

procedures, George referred to the original grant proposal and asked the staff to compare what was written there to what they were actually doing. Helen mentioned one parent who resisted participating in the child's twice-weekly program, even though all parents had been told from the beginning that their participation was expected. George wondered if this parent could be offered a home-based program, but Phil suggested that other parents might feel such special treatment was unfair. Bud was surprised by Phil's response, saying this was the first time he had heard of unfairness being an issue. George refocused their attention to the general topic by suggesting that the project needed to have options for dealing with parents who presented similar problems, recalling for them the proposal's objective of working with parents. After some discussion among Bud and the staff, Phil agreed that they needed to think further about this area. The issue was sure to arise again with other parents.

The discussion moved on to the development of individual education programs (IEPs), and the staff had many questions about this procedure. George asked how Harry and Jeff (the speech pathologist and physical therapist) participated in developing IEPs. Phil replied, but Bud disagreed with Phil's response, stating he needed more time to work out the procedures with the therapists. George next turned to the subject of parents' participation in the development of IEPs. He asked the staff to consider why they had parents participating in the classroom, and what made a parent a teacher rather than just a better parent. There was some heated discussion about this topic, but when they were ready to rate the items, the staff had come to tentative agreement.

During the review on dissemination and continuation, George again referred to the original proposal. Bud suggested they might need technical assistance in this area. They needed to find out what other projects were doing in order to determine what was unique about their own project. As this part of the review continued, George realized that the staff were expecting Bud to take the lead. Finally, Cynthia asked George to tell her what dissemination and continuation really meant, and the others admitted they didn't understand it, either. George reviewed the expectations for demonstration projects, and the project's need to be prepared to meet those expectations by keeping accurate records and collecting data from the beginning. Bud said he didn't expect the project would have accomplished a great deal in this area by the end of the year, and he invited staff to express their thoughts about time constraints and the realities of other project activities. Each voiced personal concerns about these expectations and their own lack of information. They were still struggling with developing the program for children and parents. Helen asked how they could work effectively and also be concerned about disseminating information and continuing the program after three years. Bud and George worked as a team as they explained the philosophy of demonstration and the need, early in the project, to prepare for the future. When the staff were aware of the reasons for dissemination, they seemed to understand better the scope of the project's responsibilities. They were interested, now, and wanted to support Bud in this area. George was satisfied with the discussion, and suggested it was time to take a break before tackling the next section, staff development.

After the break, Bud started the discussion by saying that staff development had been haphazard, and he saw a clear need for technical assistance in this area. George suggested they approach this topic as objectively as possible, trying to remove themselves from it personally. As a way of defining the competencies necessary for their own jobs, he advised them to look ahead and consider what would happen if another program decided to replicate their project and wanted to know what kind of staff they needed. The staff appeared open to having technical assistance in this area, but it was difficult to agree on exactly where the help was needed. They struggled with defining the difference between "fulfilling" a role and "functioning" in a role. Helen suggested they consider optional attendance at staff development activities, but Bud strongly disagreed. He made it clear that they needed a concise staff development plan, while George pointed out they also needed to discover their individual areas of strength and blend their diverse professional backgrounds.

As George was making this comment, Matt Ellis and Walter Fox came in with a third man and sat down on the couch across the room from the conference table. Bud neither acknowledged their presence nor introduced them, so George continued with the discussion. Bud asked if the evaluation component of the staff development plan should be ongoing or completed, all at once, at the end of the year. George used a medical analogy in replying that it was better to assess patients directly after applying treatment, to find out if treatment was worthwhile, than to use for too long a treatment that did not work well. He commented further that it was the staff who made the program and determined its quality.

At 4:15, George announced it was time for him to summarize, and Bud then introduced Walter Fox and Bill Roland who were sitting with Matt Ellis on the couch. George proceeded to summarize the technical assistance needs identified by the staff that day, and the staff agreed that he had covered the major points of their discussion. Bill Roland then stood up to address George. He said the needs assessment appeared to have been internal, staff-oriented, and something of a closed circuit. He would like to meet privately with George, the next day, for a summary of what had happened and for an explanation of TADS. George replied he would be happy to meet with Bill and answer his questions.

Day Two

George arrived at the school the next morning to find Bud waiting for him in the conference room. Bud began to discuss his concern that the project needed on-site technical assistance in program evaluation by saying he was uneasy because he had not yet received any feedback on whether the project was doing a good job. He also expressed concern about a lack of communication among himself, Matt Ellis, and Bill Roland. George suggested that an on-site evaluation consultant work with Bud and Matt to help them develop an evaluation plan. The plan could be presented to Bill and Walter, who would have the opportunity to modify it. This process might result in their providing more support to the project. Bud supported the idea of Matt's being more involved in the project, acknowledging that Matt's problem was lack of time. George described how a total evaluation plan, designed to cover the three years of demonstration, would include all program components, and he suggested that

Bud take some time to consider this option. Bud agreed to give it some thought and then asked George if it would be possible to get some help in dealing with his own administrative problems. Bud felt a lack of control in this respect, and was concerned that any consultant to the project would need to understand existing administrative constraints. Any plan developed would have to be presented to the administration to get their commitment to it. Bud said it would also be important for a consultant to be familiar with their type of program, in addition to being able to work within administrative constraints. George assured Bud that he was on target and was not looking for too much in meeting his technical assistance needs.

George and Bud briefly discussed the small group workshops offered by TADS, and George explained that only one person from the project could participate. If Bud were to attend, he would need to share his information with the staff so they could "own" it, too. Bud wondered if he could go to any of the TADS workshops he thought would be helpful, even if he had to pay, but George was not sure. Next, they began to talk about staff development, and Bud said he was having difficulty determining the needs of Phil, Helen, and Jeff. George suggested they look at the needs of the children and parents when they considered staff development needs, and he described how TADS could help with a materials search in the area of staff development plans and approaches.

Bud decided that he wanted technical assistance to develop a total evaluation plan, but he wondered how much time would be needed. George recommended that they plan initially for two days, and then suggested that he and Bud start designing the technical assistance plan for staff

development. Although Bud agreed that the staff would be the target of this technical assistance, he preferred to develop the plan with Matt and George, and then report it to the staff for their consideration later in the day. George said there was no need to involve staff unless they were to be part of a critical decision-making process. Bud wasn't sure about the extent to which staff should be involved, and George suggested he think about it. In the meantime, they needed to move on to developing the technical assistance agreement, using the work sheets to guide them through this process.

It was 11 o'clock when they began the task. George reviewed the procedures, and explained what would take place after TADS received the work sheets. He collaborated with Bud in developing statements that accurately reflected the project's technical assistance needs. Bud wanted to make certain he was getting all the TADS assistance available for his project. George explained each option, encouraging Bud to keep an open mind. At each decision point, Bud questioned George in detail to be sure he was getting the technical assistance he wanted, under the optimal terms, and delivered at the appropriate time.

The project secretary brought some sandwiches so they could continue to work while they ate lunch. When Matt joined them at 12:45, Bud excused himself to take care of a problem in the classroom. While Bud was gone, George summarized the technical assistance plan for evaluation that he and Bud had developed. When George had finished, Matt expressed his objections to the plan. He had already selected a colleague to help set up the evaluation plan; he did not consider evaluation to be one of the project's technical assistance needs that should be met by TADS; the

staff did not yet realize that he would be meeting many of their needs. George listened attentively and suggested that they keep technical assistance in evaluation as a low priority. Matt assured George that he was open to allowing TADS to assist in evaluation, but this was his own special area of expertise. He admitted that he might not realistically have all of the time necessary to work on it because of all his other responsibilities. He explained that he used a behavioral model to work with children of the type in the project, and he wanted the staff to use this approach.

When Bud returned, Matt explained his objections to the technical assistance plan for evaluation, saying he was willing to go ahead with the plan but he wanted the colleague he had chosen to be their technical assistance consultant. Bud stressed the importance of having a consultant with the same philosophical base as the project's. Bud suggested that TADS supply the evaluation consultant for the parent program and that Matt's choice of consultant design the component for the children's program. George intervened to point out the need for an overall evaluation design for the whole project. Matt suggested a three-person evaluation team that would include himself, his colleague, and a TADS consultant. At this point, Matt had to leave the meeting for another appointment. George suggested that the dilemma might be solved by having TADS check Matt's nominee's credentials; if he were qualified, TADS could hire him as the consultant for evaluation.

It was now 2 o'clock, and George said they needed to move along with the technical assistance agreement. He and Bud worked on this until 4:15, when Bud asked Phil, Helen, Betsy, Cynthia, and Jeff to

join the meeting. George summarized the technical assistance agreement for them. It consisted of three major technical assistance needs:

1. Assistance in designing an evaluation plan which measures the quality of the services to high-risk infants and adolescent parents

2. Assistance in designing and implementing the staff development component

3. Assistance in designing the project's community communication and persuasion efforts

Betsy asked if there was an evaluation specialist who could meet their needs, and George explained TADS' role in this search. He went on to summarize the technical assistance plans for staff development and for dissemination and continuation. The staff listened quietly and had no further questions. When he completed the summary, George asked the staff for consensus on the priorities of project needs. Phil thought evaluation should be their first priority, and the others agreed. Betsy's suggestion that staff development should be the second priority also was approved. Bud did not voice any objections to the order of priorities chosen by the staff, and George concluded the meeting at 4:45.

Bud went to his office to take a phone call, but the staff did not seem in a hurry to leave, so George took the opportunity to discuss the needs assessment with them informally. Most felt they had been prepared for the needs assessment; it had been helpful to have the forms ahead of time. They had been included in the process yesterday, but were confused about what had gone on today. They had expected to be included and they missed being part of the process. As far as the technical assistance agreement was concerned, they told George it didn't make much sense because they didn't know how it had been developed. They also

found the language in the agreement difficult to understand. On the whole, however, they agreed that the needs assessment had been helpful. It had pointed out project weaknesses. The staff had gained a better understanding of the real purposes of the project, as well as a clearer perspective about administrative aspects.

Interlude

The receptionist called George to tell him his cab was waiting. George thanked the staff for their help, and stopped at Bud's office on his way out. Bud's desk was full of two days' accumulation of messages. He told George he planned to work late that night to get caught up. He thanked George for his efforts, and said he would look forward to receiving feedback from him and from TADS.

On his flight home, George worked on a written summary of his meetings so that he would not forget any important details. He thought the needs assessment had met most of the objectives established by TADS and had identified Bud's concerns about the budgetary and organizational problems that affected the project. Although TADS did not ordinarily address projects' budgetary and management needs, George planned to report them because they could be crucial to the success of this project. As he completed his notes, George reflected that his work with Project Early Start was finished, except for sending his final report to TADS and some promised materials to Bud. It had been a challenging needs assessment, and he looked forward to receiving some follow-up information from Carol toward the end of the year.

The Memorandum of Agreement

Carol Turner was at her desk in her TADS office, reviewing the file on Project Early Start. She read Bud's evaluation report on the project's needs assessment. Bud had indicated his disappointment that George had not provided any feedback about the quality of their program. He also was uncomfortable with the fact that the technical assistance agreement was based solely on the staff's perceptions of their own needs; there had been no external criteria to help the project assess their status, and the needs assessment did not address the issues of quality. Bud had felt, however, that the on-site needs assessment had been important because it had given the consultant an opportunity to talk with the staff and observe the program.

After making a few notes, Carol took the file with her to the TADS conference room where several TADS staff members had gathered, including the director, associate director for demonstration projects, evaluation specialist, and another technical assistance coordinator. Carol led a discussion relating to the problems George had noted in his evaluation report. After reviewing them, the TADS staff concluded that it would be up to Bud or Matt to ask for assistance with their organizational problems; although the information was important for TADS to have, they could not take direct action. Their best approach was to encourage the project to discuss these problems with Steve Winston, the project officer.

When Carol reported the project's request for technical assistance in dissemination, her colleagues agreed to support the attendance of one project staff member at the small group workshop to be held at TADS the

following spring. The project could send a second person at their own expense if they wished.

Next, Carol discussed the evaluation need, and related Matt's background in evaluation. She reported his reticence about having outside help and his desire to choose the consultant himself. The evaluation specialist commented that although the colleague Matt had selected was well qualified, it would take time to orient him to TADS procedures. The other technical assistance coordinator was uncomfortable with the idea of hiring Matt's choice without considering other qualified consultants. The group identified several other consultants who should be considered, and the evaluation specialist offered to contact the consultants mentioned and select the one who would be best for the project. The TADS staff then suggested several consultants to consider for technical assistance in staff development. Carol said she would ask Bud whether he had any preferences among that group.

The technical assistance agreement was approved, signed by the TADS associate director, and forwarded to Bud and Matt for their approval and signature. The agreement defined the three areas of technical assistance identified during the needs assessment and the specific assistance to be provided by TADS during the year (see Figure 5).

Technical Assistance Need	Content Area	Method of Delivery
1. Assistance in developing a comprehensive evaluation plan which measures the quality of services to high-risk infants and their parents	Evaluation	On-site consultation
2. Assistance in designing a comprehensive staff development plan	Staff development	On-site consultation
3. Assistance in designing the project's community communication and persuasion efforts	Demonstration/Dissemination	Small group consultation

Figure 5. Summary of Project Early Start's memorandum of agreement.

Follow-Up

Carol decided to call Bud Fisher to find out whether his views about the needs assessment had changed since that event took place three months ago. Bud was ready to discuss some of the program changes that had resulted from the needs assessment. A special effort had been made to start the IEP conferences. George had stressed the need to do this, and to get the parents involved in the process. The staff were more enlightened about the total program, now, and had begun to focus on providing consistent information to parents. The needs assessment had called attention to the breakdown in communication between the project and the school administration. As a result, Bud, Matt, Walter, and Bill were holding weekly meetings, and Matt was spending more time with the project. The staff were still having some problems adjusting to Matt's leadership style, but Bud was feeling more comfortable in his relationships with the school administration.

Bud reported that Phil was now spending time in the classroom, getting to know the children. Cynthia would be leaving the staff next week. The needs assessment had pointed out the importance of having written job descriptions, and Bud had completed them. This had helped Cynthia to be aware of the difference between the role she perceived for herself and the role that needed to be filled, and her departure was by mutual agreement. Bud himself was spending more time in the classroom, observing the staff's performance and their collection of data, and he considered his presence to be an important factor in the positive changes in staff.

Bud was making an effort to act more positively toward Matt when

other staff were present, and he had come to realize that Matt was caught between Bud and the staff. By relinquishing some power to Matt, Bud had helped support Matt in his role as project director. In turn, Matt had become more supportive of Bud. Bud described himself as being more authoritarian than he had been initially, and less idealistic about the team approach to problem-solving. He recognized the need to take control and make decisions, and he credited the needs assessment with making him aware of the need to change his leadership style.

Overall, Bud considered many of their organizational conflicts on the way to resolution. George had sent him some helpful materials on organization. Bud suggested that TADS consider offering organizational and administrative workshops for new project directors and coordinators. He was trying to develop his administrative skills on his own, with help from friends and colleagues, but he didn't feel he had received any help from TADS in this area.

Bud reported to Carol that the project had not yet progressed in the area of staff development, and he was looking forward to having a consultant work with him. He was not sure what the staff's competencies were, in relation to what they should be. Although some new needs had emerged, the priorities on their technical assistance agreement had not changed. Bud had recently written the project's continuation proposal, and he had used the needs assessment outline and format to guide him and had involved the staff in the process. In general, the needs assessment had served to enhance communication among the staff, and Bud had learned many things in the process. However, he did not think the needs assessment had actually addressed the project's needs. He was

still looking for expert input to identify those needs for them. He remained uncertain that the needs identified were the real needs of the project.

Bud told Carol how much he appreciated her efforts in obtaining his first choice of consultant for staff development. He expressed dismay at the amount of time consumed in selecting dates for the technical assistance, and said he sometimes felt TADS procedures were too exacting. He also pointed out that some of Carol's calls to him had been nothing more than a restatement of information she'd already sent in a letter.

Carol thanked Bud for the information and frank discussion. She said she would call him again to find out how things had gone, after the evaluation consultation which was scheduled for the following week.

Technical Assistance Events

Technical Assistance in Evaluation

This was Sally Johnson's third visit to Project Early Start. She worked in the city where the project was located, and had agreed to be the TADS consultant and to provide a series of consultation meetings with Matt Ellis and Bud Fisher. Sally was a specialist in designing evaluation and assessment instruments, and she had a professional interest in the project's client population. TADS had recommended her as a potential consultant because her proximity to the project would allow her to provide them with more on-site consultations for shorter periods of time, giving the project time between meetings to implement her recommendations. The project staff had agreed that this would be a helpful use of time, and had abandoned the idea of receiving technical assistance from the consultant Matt had recommended. During Sally's last two visits, Matt and Bud had decided to concentrate their evaluation efforts on designing or adapting an assessment instrument to measure change or progress in the children. Today's meeting was to focus on discussing several rating instruments that Sally had sent to Matt and Bud.

Sally met Bud as she passed his office on her way to the conference room. Bud said he would be there shortly; he had been away for several days, and today was his first day back. He wondered if this was to be Sally's final visit; he wasn't sure what decisions had been made while he was gone. Sally was seated at the conference table with Matt when Bud arrived at 9:45. Matt and Bud both told Sally they had

not yet read the materials she had sent, so Sally described them briefly. She said Matt and Bud would need to decide what aspects of evaluation were to be stressed if she were to help them select the appropriate instrument. She suggested that decision should be made now; her recommendations would be in response to the project's needs and objectives.

Bud asked where the child evaluations should be done, and Sally said that decision was up to them. She pointed out the need to be concrete in any evaluation approach, predetermining who would do what, with what frequency, and in what setting. Sally continued to answer their questions about various assessment instruments, waiting to see what direction they wanted to take. Her perception of her role as consultant was to present some options and techniques that would help them to get where they wanted to go.

Matt had to leave at 10:30, but before he left he told Sally and Bud he thought things were going well. Bud and Sally set a date one month later for the next consultation. By that time, Bud and Matt were to have developed an assessment tool based on the instruments and information Sally had provided. She would work with them, then, to establish the instrument's reliability. Bud reviewed the technical assistance timeline and Sally agreed they would probably need a half-day to finish. She asked Bud if there was anything else he wanted to discuss today. He had no further questions, and said his work was cut out for him. The meeting ended at 11 o'clock, and Sally returned to her car.

While driving to her office, Sally realized she would have to wait until the next meeting to accomplish what she had hoped to cover today.

She wished Bud and Matt had had time to prepare for the meeting by studying the materials she had sent them. Sally then reflected on the positive aspects of her consultancy with the project. Matt had a strong interest in evaluation and was a good program developer and manager. He knew what he wanted and how to get it. Today's meeting had helped to solidify Matt's and Bud's ideas about what the project hoped to demonstrate. She had been able to go over materials with them, and had encouraged them to consider evaluating other components of the program.

Interlude. Carol had a note on her calendar to call Bud Fisher today to find out how last week's technical assistance in evaluation had gone. Bud was expecting her call and was prepared to give her some feedback. He said the consultation was meeting their expectations, even though he hadn't realized Sally would expect him and Matt to decide on the specific tools to be used. He really would have preferred to have Sally help them make that decision. Bud considered Sally an able consultant who was flexible, honest, quick to learn about the project, and able to focus on their needs. However, he wondered if perhaps she was not overemphasizing having them determine their own needs. On the whole, Bud felt he communicated pretty well with Sally, and he appreciated her flexibility in setting up the consultation schedule. Their conversation ended with a brief review of the on-site consultation for staff development that was scheduled for the following month. Carol said she would call Bud after that technical assistance event to find out how it had gone.

Technical Assistance in Staff Development

Roger had had slight misgivings about accepting this assignment from TADS because of his busy schedule. It had been difficult to refuse, however, once he knew the project coordinator had made it a point to request him as staff development consultant. Roger had not met Bud Fisher, but was aware that the project was developing a program in an area that had received too little attention. As a program specialist, Roger Pearson had amassed a wealth of knowledge and experience in developing programs and training people to work with severely handicapped children. When Carol Turner had called him about accepting this assignment, he couldn't help remembering his own early struggles, looking for guidance as director of an HCEEP demonstration program. He had read the project's proposal and believed they could make a real contribution. Now that he was here, he wanted to make every minute count both for the staff and for himself.

Roger was glad they were meeting in the school's small library. He always felt comfortable surrounded by books. There was a feeling of intimacy, sitting around the table with Bud, Phil, and Helen. The staff knew that Roger directed a well-known program that was working with clients and problems similar to theirs. Each presented him with a particular problem of personal concern, and Roger related the problem to his own project, describing the steps he had taken to resolve it. He was sensitive to their feelings, and frequently interrupted his explanations to ask his three companions if he was making sense to them.

Bud, Helen, and Phil listened intently to Roger, and the discussion became a free exchange. Roger used a combination of teaching and

personal sharing, and soon directed their discussion to the issue of staff burnout. He asked if they had ever talked about this, and went on to give them some guidelines for developing realistic expectations for the project and themselves. He talked about the need to develop their own personal expertise while drawing from the knowledge base in the field. He told them they would need to consider how they would share what they were doing with others and establish their own credibility.

There was a good match between Roger and these staff members. He knew how they were feeling because he'd been there. He understood their problems in dealing with children and parents and searching for limited available resources. He was staff advocate as well as expert and teacher. He told them it was all right to feel they weren't doing their jobs as well as they thought they should, but they needed to look at the children and parents to keep their perspective.

When the staff seemed ready to talk about the team approach, which Roger perceived was a concern for them, he began by describing how a project starts out focusing on mechanics and logistics before moving toward the establishment of a team identity. As he talked, Roger created a therapeutic climate, and the staff began to share some of their real feelings. Helen said it was helpful to know that others had the same problems and needs. Bud expressed the discomfort he felt with other project directors who talked only about their successes and seemed reluctant to admit to problems or failures. Roger advised Bud to take it all with a grain of salt. He recommended that Bud look also at projects that were not part of the HCEEP network. Bud continued to share his feelings, telling how naive he sometimes felt and discussing his

continuing need to know if the project was "okay." Roger asked, "Okay compared to what?" He cautioned Bud about comparing their project to others in which success is the norm. He cautioned the group about the high need for success that exists in the field of early childhood special education; they needed to look at their expectations in relation to reality. Roger asked the group to consider whether they were a research or service setting, and discussed how easy it was to become intimidated about that issue. Helen asked how they could get continuation funding if they were honest about their success rate. While he legitimized Helen's concern, noting that it was a universal one, Roger stressed the value and importance of the work the staff were doing.

Now Roger began to probe for more information, wanting to know why the grant was written, who wrote it, and what the school's commitment to it was. He talked about the differences that often exist between the goals of an organization and the goals of a project. Bud mentioned his concerns about dissemination and continuation, and Roger advised them first to articulate their model and then to begin to concentrate on informing others. Helen volunteered the observation that she might have the most satisfying staff job because it allowed her to go into the homes and establish friendships with the parents. Roger suggested that she ask the psychological consultant to help her justify building long-term relationships with the parents. He also discussed some of the ethical considerations in working with their client group, and recommended that they consider having a psychiatric consultant to assist them in this area.

They were engrossed in the morning's discussion, and it was a

surprise when Bud announced it was 11:30. Roger had requested an opportunity to observe in the project classroom for a short time before lunch, and the others joined him there. Roger met Betsy and Phyllis, the new teacher hired to replace Cynthia, as well as Jeff. Phil took the lead in answering Roger's questions about the children and their parents. The half-hour in the classroom gave Roger a chance to get some additional impressions about the project and staff. He enjoyed observing the children and expressed his appreciation of what they were doing.

Bud had arranged to have lunch brought in so he and Roger could have a private meeting in the conference room. Roger shared with Bud some of his impressions about the staff. Phil's use of professional jargon when talking about the children and parents had made Roger somewhat uncomfortable. Roger felt this could present barriers to establishing good relationships with the parents and other staff members. He suggested that Bud might establish a therapeutic milieu for the staff, in a group setting, as a means of working on problems like this. Roger recalled that he personally had had to learn that he didn't need to have all the answers. He had discovered that this allowed for more involvement from staff, which was confirmed by the fact that each of them could describe the program in the same way.

Phil and Helen joined Roger and Bud in the library for the afternoon meeting. Roger continued a conversation he was having with Bud about the organizational structure. Phil expressed his feelings of being splintered by his dual responsibilities. Bud talked about his frustrations when the school administration made policy decisions that affected the project, at the same time pointing out the advantages of

having the multiple resources available to them in this large organization.

The discussion turned next to the needs assessment, and several comments were made about the minimal pay-off from a process that involved so much time. Roger was quick to point out that each of them had filled out the needs assessment forms, and that process was itself part of their professional development. He also said there were benefits gained from the sharing that took place in the large staff meeting during the needs assessment.

Betsy joined the meeting when the children left at 3:15. The staff asked Roger for suggestions of materials, books, and other resources that would be useful. Roger carefully reviewed the available materials, and the staff noted his suggestions. When he had finished, Bud asked Roger what he considered to be unique about their project. Roger reinforced the positive aspects of their curriculum design and approach to parents, as well as their potential for providing important information to the field about working with their client population.

At 4 o'clock, all of them were ready to admit they were tired. They had been working intensely since early that morning, and Roger had given them much to think about in the way of information, ideas, and issues. The technical assistance agreement provided the project with two days of Roger's consultation time, and he asked if they now considered a second day worthwhile. Bud said he felt they needed time to synthesize what they had learned today, and he was not sure a second day would be beneficial. Roger assured them he was prepared to spend the next day with them, and he would be available for all or any part of it.

Bud suggested that Roger call him the following morning, and they might be able to tie up loose ends by phone. Roger agreed, and expressed his enjoyment in working with them. He told the staff to feel free to call him at any time in the future, if they had questions. The consultation concluded at 4:15.

Interlude. Carol placed a call to Bud Fisher to find out how things had gone during last week's staff development consultation. She was anxious to hear Bud's reaction, and she could also use this telephone time to make final arrangements for Bud's attendance at the small group workshop at TADS next week.

It disappointed Carol to learn that the consultation had not met Bud's expectations. Bud said it was most helpful in identifying relevant literature and resources, and in providing a framework for thinking about their future direction. However, he had hoped it would provide them with a more definitive plan for staff development, with specific goals and objectives defined as a result. The staff had been pleased with the consultation, however, and Bud made it clear that he was the one who had wanted more. All of the staff had enjoyed the opportunity to talk with someone like Roger, who had so much experience working with similar client populations. Roger's greatest strengths as a consultant were his extensive knowledge in the field and his interpersonal skills. He had been supportive and flexible, had no predetermined plan for the consultation, and remained open to their needs. Bud considered Roger's flexibility to be a weakness, in one sense, because it had been difficult to pin him down and get a specific plan. Bud wondered whether

Roger had understood this to be one of Bud's expectations; perhaps Bud had not made it known strongly enough. In general, the staff seemed to have gotten what they wanted from the consultation, and Bud himself had enjoyed it, feeling at ease and able to say whatever he wished. There were times, though, when he had wondered if Roger understood him, because his questions weren't answered specifically.

Bud wondered whether their needs had been made clear to Roger, because the consultation had not followed the outline of the technical assistance agreement. He did not plan any follow-up with Roger, although he knew he could call Roger if he had any questions. At this point, he felt he was probably ready to design his own staff development plan.

Carol thanked Bud for his frank evaluation of the consultation. She reviewed next week's schedule with him, and said she was looking forward to seeing him at the small group workshop.

Technical Assistance in Demonstration/Dissemination/Continuation

Twenty people from HCEEP projects had arrived in Chapel Hill yesterday to participate in the TADS workshop. Last night's meeting was short, devoted to introductions and a brief history of the workshop topic. Henry Hobbs, a TADS staff member, had enjoyed the opportunity to become acquainted with the participants during the social hour that followed the meeting. Most of the TADS staff were involved in the planning and presentations for the workshop. Henry was scheduled to provide individual consultation for Bud Fisher, project coordinator of Project Early Start, at several times during the two days. Three hours of individual consultation were scheduled for each participant during the workshop. The first would occur this morning, after Henry presented a group session on product development. Henry was direct and expert in his talk, inviting input and sharing from workshop participants. He provided information of general value rather than project-specific.

After his presentation, Henry went to a small conference room with Bud Fisher and another workshop participant for individual consultation. The two project coordinators seemed to have similar needs, and TADS staff had thought a joint consultation might be effective. When they settled down at the conference table, Henry asked who would like to go first. Bud Fisher didn't hesitate to say he would prefer to be first, and he began by discussing the potential products to be developed by his project. He focused on the assessment instrument they were designing, and pointed out the unique qualities of their client group. He talked of their problems with minimal parent participation. He wanted to know how to deal with this problem and gave, as example, one parent who was

not cooperating at that time.

Henry listened attentively and asked several direct questions during Bud's discussion, attempting to identify the underlying problems. His probing was gentle but persistent. He asked Bud if they had changed their approach prior to the time when parent attendance diminished. Bud acknowledged they had, and Henry suggested they review the new approach to determine if it was one of the reasons for lack of interest or resistance. Bud continued to look for direction, stating he was still not sure what to do and was grappling for concrete ideas. When Henry asked if Bud had requested information from Carol Turner on parents and related strategies, Bud said he had not. He had visited another project working with similar clients, but they had not had any written products to share with him.

After 30 minutes, Henry summarized their discussion by defining two issues that seemed to concern Bud: strategies for working with parents, and development of curriculum to be used by service providers. Henry discussed the considerations involved in establishing the validity and reliability of training materials, and suggested that the system under which the project was operating might not be the appropriate one. Bud responded well to Henry's direct approach, and Henry assured Bud they would pursue this topic during their afternoon meeting.

Interlude. When the two-day workshop had ended, Carol was eager to meet with Henry to find out about his consultation sessions with Bud. Henry told her he felt Bud had received the kind of consultation he expected, given the group setting and time restrictions. Bud now had

the necessary information for making decisions about the assessment instrument, parent program, and curriculum for training service providers. Henry wished he had been better informed about Bud's real needs and the project setting, although Carol had probably communicated Bud's needs to him accurately. So much depended on how well Bud had crystallized his needs. Henry believed his communication with Bud had been satisfactory. He was able to identify major concerns for their consultation, and to generate some alternatives for dealing with problems. Now it was up to Bud to take follow-up initiative. Bud was to contact Carol to request an information search and was to attempt to clarify the strategies the project was using with parents.

The next day, Carol received a phone call from Bud. After answering his questions about the travel voucher for his trip to Chapel Hill, Carol took the opportunity to ask Bud about his reactions to the workshop. Bud said his consultation with Henry had given him what he had expected, and more. He was looking for information and feedback, and Henry had been very clear in giving him direction. Bud felt he now knew where to start. This had been a major accomplishment of the workshop for Bud, along with what he had learned during the group presentations. As a matter of fact, Bud had hoped to accomplish nothing more at the workshop. He thought Henry was a wonderful listener who synthesized information well. Bud said he needed that kind of synthesis. He and Henry had communicated well, although Bud hadn't always been sure where to start. He didn't know just how much information Henry had about Project Early Start. He wasn't certain Henry was aware of his needs until he told Henry what they were.

Carol asked what follow-up plans Bud had as a result of the consultation. Bud said he would be asking her to find materials for working with parents, and would contact the TADS evaluation specialist about validating their assessment instrument. He also hoped to work on a booklet for training service providers to work with this client population, using the input he had received from Henry. When the booklet was finished, Bud intended to ask Henry for reaction and feedback, something he would feel comfortable in doing. In summary, Bud thought the workshop and individual consultations had been important to the overall goals of his project, but dissemination was not a pressing matter at this time.

Carol thanked Bud for his feedback and said she would call him later about completing the evaluation report on technical assistance. There were no further technical assistance events scheduled for the year, and a new agreement would be developed during the next year.

Epilogue

The technical assistance events for Project Early Start had been completed for the year, and Jim, the case study observer, was spending a day at the project, interviewing the staff. Bud had arranged a series of meetings for this purpose, and the first was with Matt Ellis. Matt told Jim that his recent resignation as project director was the culmination of a continuing struggle with the school administration. Matt was very supportive of Bud, and expressed confidence in Bud's competence. He described the progress they had made in developing an assessment instrument, but acknowledged that other aspects of evaluation had not received attention because the project was pressured to provide immediate services. Matt thought this was unfortunate; he believed the project needed to have a stronger evaluation component. Turning to a discussion of the effects of technical assistance on staff development, Matt said he thought Phil, in particular, had been influenced positively. Phil was now addressing problems with parents that he had been unable to see before. He was more sensitive to the parents' needs and was helping rather than teaching them. Technical assistance had had a major imapct on both Bud and Phil, according to Matt, but not too much impact on the rest of the staff. Jim asked if Matt thought having a project director and a project coordinator was a workable combination. Matt believed it was, but that it required the project director to superimpose his guidance over the project's day-to-day activities, deal with differing staff personalities, and stand back to look down the road. Jim thanked Matt for his open comments and wished him luck in his new position.

Meeting next with Helen and Phil, Jim asked Helen to describe their

perceptions of the technical assistance provided by TADS. Neither had met Sally Johnson, and they were unaware of the project's evaluation plans. Roger Pearson had helped confirm for them the fact that their problems in the project were to be expected, but even though Roger had been reassuring, they thought no actual changes had been made in the project as a result of his consultation. Project staff were attending more workshops and conferences in their areas of weakness, but they did not see these in relation to a formal staff development plan. As far as they knew, that plan had not been written. Both Phil and Helen had felt left out of the decision-making process since the needs assessment. This feeling did not affect their daily performance with clients, but they had little incentive to be concerned with overall project goals. In fact, if their opinions were asked, they might hesitate to give them. Their high priority was working with the children and parents.

Jeff joined the meeting shortly before Phil and Helen left; he told Jim he was pleased with his part-time work as physical therapist on the project because the staff got along well. The small program enabled them to have good communication. Jeff wasn't sure about the impact of technical assistance. He explained that he had two bosses and there were two budgets. He had not been involved in Roger Pearson's consultation, which he understood to have focused on the needs of parents. His primary responsibility was keeping track of the children's motor progress and training the teachers to work in this area. He sometimes made a home visit, if there was a special need, but he ordinarily reached the parents through the teachers. Jeff thought he could benefit from some orientation to the total scope of the project.

Bud had arranged to spend the next hour with Jim to review the year's technical assistance. He first discussed evaluation, reminding Jim that his concerns at the beginning of the year had been about program quality. Bud had felt the need to be reassured that the project was doing a good job, and he now knew they were because he had seen positive changes in the children and parents. He also had confidence in the staff's competence because he had had the opportunity to compare them with the staffs of other projects. Bud's present concern was to document the positive changes in the children and parents in a way that would be satisfactory to a third party such as the Office of Special Education.

Bud talked next about staff development, stating that he thought both Bill Roland and Walter Fox believed staff development activities were unnecessary. Bud believed in good training for the staff, but felt he had to fight for it quietly and carefully. He defended the staff's limited involvement in planning and decision-making on the basis of time constraints. He said the staff still viewed the needs assessment as having taken time away from their major function. Bud considered planning to be his role, and he requested staff feedback only after a plan was documented. The fact that the staff had not made any recommendations for changing the staff development plan led him to believe that they might not want to be involved in planning, even though Bud believed that the quality of the program would improve with increased staff involvement. Bud suggested that staff participation in the needs assessment had made them uncomfortable because they were asked to conceptualize a new idea for which they were not prepared. Looking back, Bud thought

the needs assessment had been scheduled too early in the year. If it were held now, the staff would be prepared to become involved and identify their real needs. The process had been a good group interaction, however, and had served as a vehicle for getting the staff to understand the project. As far as technical assistance was concerned, Bud did not feel there were any barriers as long as the school wasn't paying for it. Bill Roland had approved Bud's attendance at the TADS workshop because Bud would be learning about potential funding sources. Bud felt he had learned a lot from the workshop and from Roger Pearson.

Toward the end of their discussion, Bud told Jim that he saw TADS as a supportive source, although he resented the time it took to develop the technical assistance agreement and to complete forms. He expected technical assistance would be more helpful as the project's real needs emerged. His final comment to George during the needs assessment had been about the program; Bud was glad they had worked with children right from the beginning. It provided them with a good basis for learning and changing, even though it had placed immediate demands on their time that limited their ability to concentrate on long-term planning. Perhaps other projects did a better job of conceptualizing their long-range plans because they were not faced with immediate service demands. However, Bud believed that Project Early Start's plans could be more effective because they were based on actual experiences with clients.

Jim thanked Bud for taking time to share his feelings about the first year's technical assistance events. He said he would be looking forward to seeing Bud again when the case study entered its second phase during the following year.

Several weeks after his trip to Project Early Start, Jim met with Carol Turner to review her perceptions of the year's technical assistance efforts. Their meeting began with an update of the events that had taken place after ratification of the technical assistance agreement, and they talked first of how the evaluation consultant had been selected. The TADS evaluation specialist had contacted Matt's first choice for consultant. He expressed an interest in working with the project, but, although TADS was willing to provide him with the necessary background information, it developed that he would not be available during the project's requested time for consultation. Evaluation was the project's top technical assistance priority, and this was one of the major factors in the final selection of Sally Johnson as consultant. Sally had been available during the appropriate time, lived nearby, and was interested in the assignment. At least as important, if not more so, was the fact that Sally had been the evaluation consultant for another HCEEP project working with a similar population, and that project had developed a successful evaluation plan. Carol had called Bud to tell him about Sally, and he had asked for time to think about her selection. When Carol checked with him two weeks later, Bud gave his approval. Carol didn't know what process Bud had used to make this decision. The TADS evaluation specialist had recommended that Sally establish a written work schedule for the consultation so that TADS would know how she planned to carry it out. TADS did not receive this schedule, although Carol was aware of each visit Sally made. However, Carol had not known that a comprehensive evaluation plan was not developed until after the technical assistance was completed and she received Bud's evaluation report. In reviewing her files, Carol found a

copy of the detailed letter she'd sent to Sally before Sally's first visit to the project, in which she had clearly stated the expectation that Sally would assist the project in developing a comprehensive evaluation plan. Carol had enclosed the technical assistance agreement with the letter for further clarification.

A similar procedure had been followed with Roger Pearson. Carol had enclosed the technical assistance agreement with her letter which detailed the purpose of his consultation as developing a comprehensive staff development plan. Carol recalled a conversation with Bud, prior to Roger's consultation visit, in which Bud expressed an interest in defining staff competencies for the project. Carol had related Bud's interest in this topic to Roger during one of their phone conversations, and she could only speculate that this might have influenced Roger's approach in some way. Carol also recalled receiving a late afternoon phone call from Bud on the day of Roger's consultation, requesting that Carol send him samples of staff development plans.

Carol told Jim she thought the project had done fairly well in preparing themselves for technical assistance. They hadn't utilized consultants as well as they might have, but she quickly qualified this comment with the observation that they had done as well as most projects she had worked with. Carol didn't think the original expectations for technical assistance in evaluation and staff development had been met. The agreement called for assistance in developing an evaluation plan, but more time actually had been invested in developing the assessment instrument. Roger Pearson had spent time talking about staff competencies, but had not developed a staff development plan.

Carol outlined for Jim the other kinds of technical assistance that TADS had provided for Project Early Start during the year. She had sent Bud various materials on staff development and information on an integrated team approach to services. Also, at Bud's request, she had sent information on record-keeping and data-collection systems. During the year, Bud had received several TADS newsletters and publications. Carol had not spent as much time as she initially anticipated on problems of organization. She had been alerted to problems in this area through George's evaluation of the needs assessment, and had called Bud to talk about this and offer to provide help. Bud had thought things would work out, and said he knew she was available as a resource. Carol had heard nothing further from Bud on that subject.

In summary, Carol believed she had responded to Project Early Start's requests and had met their expectations, although she had received very few requests for information. She found Bud to be an easy administrator to work with; he had obviously developed an effective system for returning phone calls, completing forms, and in general dealing with the routines that provided her with the information she needed. Had she conducted the needs assessment or any of the on-site consultations herself, she might have obtained more information, her interactions with the project might have been different, she might have been more effective in helping with organizational problems, and Bud might have requested more from her and from TADS. But Carol pointed out that a different interaction might not necessarily have been a better one. The purpose of TADS was to serve as a resource to projects and to provide them with a variety of individuals and skills to meet their needs.

As Jim and Carol ended their meeting, they concluded the final event of the first year of Project Early Start, from TADS' perspective. The project had completed its first year of three as a demonstration program, and its first year as a consumer of technical assistance. Now it was time to complete the final reports and make plans for the second year. It was also time for Jim to write his case study report and the results of his observations.

CASE #2: PROJECT CO-OP

Participants

(in order of their appearance in the case description)*

Alan Adams	Project Director
Bill Anderson	Case Study Observer
Jay Arbey	TADS Technical Assistance Coordinator
Martha Bryson	Occupational Therapist
Sandy Dawes	Teacher of Infants
Sharon Ericson	Needs Assessor
Eloise Jacobs	School Principal
Marie Johnson	Student Teacher
Cynthia Lee	Teacher of Infants
Elaine Mitchell	Aide
Anne Newton	Teacher of 2- to 4-Year-Olds
Jean Sellers	Project Coordinator
Ken Stevens	Evaluator
Marilyn Thompson	Evaluator
Sue Wilson	Teacher of 3- to 5-Year-Olds
Ursula Todd	Technical Assistance Consultant

*The names and personal characteristics of the participants have been disguised to preserve confidentiality.

Prologue

Bill Anderson entered the college building where he had been told he would find the office of Alan Adams. Bill had agreed to serve as TADS' case study observer for Project Co-Op, and he was here to meet the project's director before the needs assessment began the next day. Alan Adams, he had learned, spent half of his professional time as a college professor and the other half in his administrative duties with the HCEEP project.

As he entered Alan's office, which he observed was lined with books and crowded with computer print-outs, Bill thought that Alan appeared to be an almost stereotypic college professor. His tweed jacket had elbow patches, and pipe smoke curled lazily above his head. While they engaged in introductory conversation, Bill noted that Alan was a person of good humor with a relaxed, outgoing manner. When their discussion turned to Alan's work, however, he found that Alan had an intense, self-directed, no-nonsense approach to his work. He cared very much about the college's special education students, with whom he worked closely. They would eventually become teachers of the young children who, through no fault of their own, were severely or profoundly handicapped. Alan also cared deeply about those children.

During their drive to the airport to meet the needs assessor, Alan described for Bill the organization of Project Co-Op. It was a joint undertaking of the college where Alan taught and a nearby county school system, and its staff reflected the dual sponsorship. Alan and the two teachers of infants were employed by the project through the college, and all three were new to the school system. The teachers of the 2- to

4-year-old and the 3- to 5-year-old children were employed by the school system; they were assigned full-time to the project now, but both had been employed in other capactities at the same school previously. The occupational therapist, formerly employed by a nearby school system, was now a college employee assigned to the project. The project coordinator was a member of the school system's central administrative staff. In the half of his professional time that Alan spent with Project Co-Op, he had major decision-making responsibilities for the project's operation. Although this was his first year with the project, working with the kind of children being served by Project Co-Op was not a new experience for Alan. He had been involved in the operation of two other HCEEP projects in the past. Alan had written the project proposal and had participated in the project's development.

The needs assessor's flight was late on this rainy afternoon in mid-November, so Alan continued to discuss the project, his plans for it, and his hopes and concerns about technical assistance as they sat in the airport lounge. He was looking forward, he said, to the project's being validated by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP). In fact, his personal focus for the year was to develop the base for JDRP. The program design anticipated this event; it included an extensive, built-in record-keeping system. Alan suggested that preparation for JDRP was the principal area in which technical assistance would be needed that year.

Their conversation covered a wide range of topics. Alan indicated his pleasure that project staffing was complete, and he rated the staff highly as he described their attitudes and competencies. Bill could see that although Alan expected his own role to be directive, he would be

accepting of staff ideas and open to suggestions. At the same time, he would set high performance standards. The formal needs assessment, to begin the next day, and the technical assistance process would be a new experience for Alan. Although he had experienced needs assessments and technical assistance with other projects, they had been conducted more informally. This time, all staff had been included, and each member was to have completed a profile form before the next day's sessions. Alan said his only concern about technical assistance was whether it could be provided when he wanted it. He appeared not to be concerned about the case study, although he subsequently expressed the hope that participation would not be a barrier to their calling on some consultant the project might want for technical assistance.

Finally the plane arrived, and with it came Sharon Ericson, the TADS needs assessor. Sharon was project director for a successful HCEEP project at a university three states removed from Project Co-Op. She was an experienced needs assessor, having performed that task for TADS on several occasions over the last two years. Bill's first impression was of a somewhat reserved person with a warm, gentle spirit.

The three drove back to town, where they were to meet with Jean Sellers, the project coordinator. Jean had been a special education classroom teacher and had recently shifted to administration. Now she was moving rapidly into assignments with increased responsibilities, including serving as the school system's coordinator for Project Co-Op. Alan and Jean reviewed for Sharon and Bill some of the project's background and progress. They ended their meeting with a discussion of the details of the needs assessment to begin the next morning.

The Needs Assessment

It was 9 o'clock when Sharon arrived at Oak Ridge School the next morning, to be met by Eloise Jacobs, the school principal and a veteran educator who described herself as a "traditional special education teacher turned administrator." Eloise was self-assured and positive in discussing Project Co-Op, stating that her role was to coordinate project activities with other school functions. She led Sharon on an extensive tour of the school and introduced her to the staff, while describing the school's programs. At the conclusion of the tour, Eloise took Sharon to the project office where Alan and Jean were waiting for her.

Sharon noted that the project office was a traditional special-purpose room, approximately 20' x 40', containing a long conference table with wooden straight-back and metal chairs. There was the usual assortment of desks and file cabinets. There were also a sofa and a large easy chair. The day was rainy and cold, and the windows were open because of the warm temperature created by steam radiators. From time to time, passing trucks made their presence known, but Sharon was to find that the open windows never really interfered with the needs assessment process.

Alan and Jean briefly described the composition of the project staff for Sharon. Ken Stevens, she learned, was a university graduate student who worked part-time as project evaluator. Cynthia Lee and Sandy Dawes were the teachers of infants. Anne Newton taught the 2- to 4-year-olds and Sue Wilson, the 3- to 5-year-olds. Cynthia and Sa[illegible] were new to the school system and were paid from project funds. [illegible] and Sue were supported by the school system; Anne had been at Oak Ridge

for three years and Sue, for two years. Martha Bryson was an occupational therapist who was paid from project funds.

Alan told Sharon that the staff would have to be interviewed two at a time, during the morning and early afternoon, so as to minimize disruption of regular school activities. The entire group would assemble after the children had gone for the day. Sharon wondered how this arrangement would affect the needs assessment, since her previous experience had been with entire staffs working as a group.

Ken Stevens, the project evaluator, was the first staff person to appear. Sharon began to discuss the needs assessment instrument with him, explaining the purposes of the instrument as they talked. In a short while, the two teachers of infants arrived, and Ken left to attend to other duties. Sharon initially engaged Sandy and Cynthia in an informal conversation about their work with infants. Then she told them something about herself, and moved on to questions about their responses to items on the needs assessment instrument. She encouraged them to explain and expand upon their answers, and responded to them in a supportive manner. Their interview lasted 45 minutes.

The next pair Sharon met with were Martha Bryson, the occupational therapist, and Ken Stevens who had returned. Sharon explained the need to rush a bit because of the circumstances surrounding the day's events. She asked Martha about her work, listening attentively but taking no notes. Ken explained that he could stay only a few minutes longer, so Sharon reviewed his answers to the questions on the needs assessment instrument, concentrating especially on those dealing with issues of program evaluation. After Ken left, Sharon spent another 30 minutes

with Martha, leading her into an informal discussion of various items of interest to Martha on the questionnaire.

After lunch, Sharon met with Anne Newton and Sue Wilson. By this time, Sharon was able to move quickly through an explanation of the "who, what, where, when, and why" of the needs assessment process, and the atmosphere was cordial and relaxed. Anne and Sue expressed concerns which were somewhat different from those of the staff Sharon had interviewed in the morning, apparently because of their longer association with the school. Each talked more about her own classroom practices, work, interests, and priorities. With little pressure, Sharon was able to keep the conversation and interview flowing, giving neutral yet supportive responses.

When the children left the school at 3 o'clock, the entire staff gathered, and the next hour and a half were spent reviewing the comments and suggestions made during earlier interviews. The group was joined by Marie Johnson, who was introduced to Sharon as a student teacher, and Elaine Mitchell. Elaine was one of the project's two paraprofessionals; the other was absent due to illness. Alan Adams and Jean Sellers also returned to take part in the final meeting of the day.

Sharon began the session by reviewing the organization of TADS and discussing the needs assessment process. She gave a number of examples of the kinds of services TADS could provide, and spelled out the responsibilities both of the staff and of herself for developing the technical assistance agreement. As they turned to a discussion of the needs assessment instrument, Sharon said she would like to go through it in sequence. However, when several participants indicated they would have

to leave before the end of the meeting, she adjusted the procedure. She invited all of the staff to be sure that the points they were anxious to make were covered, and that she had interpreted their remarks correctly.

The first topic they addressed concerned project administration and management, and the discussion was dominated by the project administrators, Alan Adams and Jean Sellers. Since this was their first participation in a discussion of the needs assessment instrument, Sharon had not yet had the opportunity to explain to them, as she had to other staff, the need to respond to questionnaire items in terms of the total project status rather than in terms of the specific technical assistance required for the project. There appeared also to be some disagreement between Alan and Jean about some of the items. Sharon didn't attempt to mediate their differences, nor did she insist on clarifying the purpose of the discussion.

About a third of the way through the time allotted for the session, Cynthia, Sue, and Marie had to leave for other appointments. Discussion among the remaining participants generally proceeded well. There were occasions when questions arose about interpretation of some of the items on the needs assessment instrument, particularly in the section on program planning and evaluation. Sharon was able to serve as a resource for clarifying the questions.

Alan was the next person to leave, saying he had a teaching assignment at the college. By 4 o'clock, only five staff remained: Jean, Sandy, Anne, Martha, and Elaine. Jean continued to dominate the discussion on administration and management, with Anne and Sandy occasionally nodding their agreement. Discussion centered around staff roles,

evaluation planning, and record keeping. There were no comments or noticeable reactions from Martha or Elaine at that time. Sharon acknowledged her personal bias about the importance of careful record keeping, and expressed concern that her bias not unduly influence the discussion.

With group agreement, Sharon speeded up consideration of some questions. At one point, during discussion about items concerning staff development, she shifted into an advocacy role on behalf of the staff in helping to find a way for TADS to support the participation of two staff members (Sandy Dawes and Martha Bryson) in a special workshop, an off-site technical assistance event. The workshop would provide training in language development, feeding techniques, and general management of the children served by the project. The group was supportive of Sandy's and Martha's attendance at the workshop, but believed that the attendance had already been planned; it was to have been at personal expense, however.

The conversation then shifted rather dramatically to a discussion of what was described as a "communications" problem among staff members, including speculation as to the degree of impact this problem might be having on the project. Sharon accepted these comments and was careful not to be judgmental. She concluded the day's session with an explanation that she would synthesize the day's conversations and would present a draft copy of the technical assistance agreement for group discussion the next day.

Day Two

Sharon and Bill were driven to Oak Ridge School by Jean Sellers. En route, Sharon discussed with Jean the needs that had been identified the previous day. They were:

1. Assistance in preparing for the movement of children to less restrictive environments
2. Assistance in designing and implementing curriculum improvement
3. Assistance in developing new skills in pre-speech, language stimulation, and feeding for low-functioning children
4. Assistance in identifying what instruments are available for the summative assessment of young S/PH students
5. Assistance in measuring parent satisfaction with services to children
6. Assistance in obtaining information on integrating feeding and pre-speech goals with cognitive and language goals

Sharon suggested that it would be useful to keep a process record of the project, so that in future, others could learn what had taken place as the program developed.

Sharon's first meeting on this second day of the needs assessment was with Marie Johnson, the student teacher, and Elaine Mitchell, the aide. Sharon restated the purpose of TADS and asked questions about their understanding of the needs assessment instrument. Elaine had questions about record keeping, and Sharon described fully the help that TADS could give. Marie indicated that she felt limited by having contact with only two children and that, as a result, she really did not have a good overview of the project. She expressed her feelings about being a student teacher with the project. Elaine expressed similar feelings about being an aide, and referred to the previous day's

discussion about communication. As Sharon listened, she encouraged them to work through their feelings. Marie said she had felt left out of the project at the beginning because she had not received the same orientation as other staff. Because she had been "bombarded" with so much to learn, she thought that "student teachers should have the option of being here."

Sharon's next conversation was with Martha Bryson, the occupational therapist. They discussed details of the off-site technical assistance workshop, and the content of the technical assistance agreement need statement and objective which would cover that activity. They agreed that Sandy Dawes, the other staff member who would be attending the workshop, should also be present for this discussion so, as they waited for Sandy to join them, Sharon reviewed the draft agreeement she had prepared about the parent component technical assistance. When Sandy arrived, there was general discussion about the wording of the agreement for the workshop. When Jean Sellers arrived, she agreed to the wording that had been developed by the others. Sharon then re-read the entire draft agreement for Sandy, Martha, and Jean.

The conversation turned next to the topic of the "communications problem" that had been introduced on the first day of the needs assessment. There was some initial hedging on how to deal with the problem. Sharon outlined some of the "facts of life" about project development in general, and suggested that to be successful, the approach being taken in Project Co-Op really called for the development of good staff communications. Jean expressed the feeling that not all staff believed communication was a problem, but she also said she had reversed her

earlier thinking, and now believed they needed outside help to solve the problem.

The discussion settled into a dialogue between Jean and Sandy as to whether the approach taken by the project was, itself, causing problems because of implementation difficulties. Sandy felt that staff might be willing to change their practices to a new approach if they felt comfortable in knowing what to change to. On the subject of improving communication, all three staff members shied away from "touchy-feely" experiences in favor of dealing with issues by resolving common professional concerns. Sharon, who had remained apart from this conversation, now interjected an inquiry as to how the staff would deal with conflicts. Responses to, and reflections on her comment were among staff members rather than being directed to Sharon.

Next, Sharon focused their attention on the topic of dual management of the project. There was considerable talk about different perceptions of the situation but some felt that, from time to time, staff received different messages from different management persons. Jean said to Sharon, "If you leave without the issue of communication being addressed, I'll be frustrated."

There followed a wide-ranging discussion covering many topics. Through it all, Sharon limited her participation to asking for clarifications. When a question arose about what would happen if Alan disagreed with technical assistance needs that the rest of the staff felt were important, Sharon suggested that this was something they would have to work out with him. Some time was spent in discussing various technical assistance needs items and project implementation problems.

Alan Adams arrived at noon, having been delayed by an emergency meeting at the college. Sharon reported to him the results of the work done the afternoon before after he had left, and reviewed the draft agreement she had drawn up during the evening. She raised the issue of communication with Alan, who agreed with some aspects of her description of the problem. Sharon was accepting of his position, but said she also could understand the other staff members' feelings. Jean re-emphasized that communication was, indeed, a problem. Sharon then adopted the role of facilitator, and attempted to clarify the issue between Alan and Jean. During this discussion, Sandy and Martha remained silent.

In a general discussion of the needs assessment process, Alan indicated that he didn't believe it was a good idea to have the needs assessment so early in a new project, and that he would not again ask for one in the early months of a new program. He discussed several issues, comparing short-term change with change over the long-term. Among other areas of concern, he expressed a desire for technical assistance in curriculum design.

Next, Sharon focused the conversation on the needs assessment results. After some detailed discussion of one item, Alan asked for an overview of all the needs raised by the staff. He gave his approval to the off-site training for pre-speech, language, and feeding, noting that it had already been adopted as an item for staff participation. He added other needs, and discussed priorities as he saw them. During this time, differences of opinion and position were expressed by Alan and Jean. Sharon attempted to explain Jean's positions to Alan, and indicated they were representative of positions expressed by other staff

during Alan's absence from the meetings.

In further discussion of specific aspects of the technical assistance agreement draft, Alan stated that assistance in locating summative evaluation measures was important because it would help him address one of his major priorities, that of preparing the project's continuation proposal for the coming year. Sharon pointed out that the differences in priorities of the project director and the staff made it difficult for her to develop the final technical assistance worksheets. She acknowledged that carrying out the needs assessment in a fragmented way had not allowed Alan's priorities to be communicated, even by implication, to other staff; nor had Alan had the opportunity to hear the staff's reasons for recommending certain technical assistance needs. Alan noted that, in any event, the final decision was his to make. Jean argued for staff consensus on the agreement. There continued to be discussion for several minutes between Alan and Jean about the priorities of items on the technical assistance agreement.

When Jean left to attend another meeting, Alan and Sharon remained to complete the technical assistance agreement forms. Alan asked how TADS would reach its decisions about priorities of items. Sharon equivocated somewhat on her answer because, she said, she wasn't sure. Nevertheless, they agreed that tentative priorities would be set, and that Sharon would contact TADS about unanswered questions before final priorities were reached. She attempted to reach TADS at that time but was unsuccessful. She said she would call again the next day from her home, and would call Alan with the results.

The needs assessment session was concluded by Sharon's reviewing

for Alan what had been accomplished so far and what she would do after leaving. Sharon and Alan summarized the two days' work with an informal discussion. Alan expressed positive feelings about the process, while acknowledging that problems had arisen. He said he thought it had been a good thing for all involved, and that the staff were about where he expected them to be, in terms of development, at this point in the project. He re-stated his concern about the need for timeliness in TADS' response to the project's technical assistance requests.

Interlude

Sharon reviewed the needs assessment with Bill Anderson, the case study observer, as he drove her to the airport. She thought the two day's work had been successful in spite of the problems of conducting the needs assessment in small group interviews. It had gone well, she believed, because of the degree of competence already achieved by the project staff.

After leaving Sharon at the airport, Bill started on the long drive to his home. He had time to think back to a conversation he had had a few weeks earlier with Jay Arbey, TADS technical assistance coordinator for Project Co-Op. Jay said he had met Alan and Jean at the HCEEP orientation conference the previous summer, and had spent two or three hours with them discussing the project's background and needs. By early October, Jay had had one other telephone contact with Alan, when he told Alan that TADS could provide some technical assistance immediately if it was needed. In fact, said Jay, there had been some discussion at that time about the child progress evaluation planned for the

project. Both TADS and the project had been concerned about the system that had been chosen for monitoring progress. Alan had indicated he would follow up on the concern, but Jay had had no feedback from him. Jay had wondered about what had happened, and had expressed some concern that after a fast start, there had been no apparent follow up by the project.

Jay had also discussed with Bill the relationship between the project and the college where Alan Adams taught, looking upon it as a real "partnership." Jay had known of Alan's priority for JDRP approval. He was looking forward to developing an open relationship with Alan, and expected that Alan would be diligent in his follow through with technical assistance consultants and in conducting the administrative tasks related to technical assistance, such as completing evaluation forms. Jay hoped the project would find him receptive to their needs, and would understand that TADS had many resources and people available for help.

The project might need help with an evaluation plan, and with design or adaptation of the curriculum, Jay had told Bill. Since the teachers were being asked to make major changes in their teaching styles, he anticipated that assistance might be needed in that area, as well as in developing among school personnel a sense of ownership of the project. Jay also expected that the project might need assistance with its parent program, and with developing an understanding among staff members of the implications of working as a model project.

Bill recalled that Jay had been positive in his feelings about his working relationship with the project because he thought that he and Alan had similar styles. "It feels good to work with him," Jay had said.

He thought any problems that might arise would be caused by the pressure under which the staff would be working. Alan might feel overloaded, and the project might not take the time to evolve slowly. Jay had the impression that there was little room for mistakes or change, that there was a great commitment to the original project plan, and that the project was locked into the direction of JDRP approval. On the whole, however, Jay had hoped to be supportive of meeting project needs during the year. As he reached his home, Bill made a mental note to check with Jay at the end of the year to learn whether Jay thought he had been successful in achieving his goals for working with Project Co-Op.

The Memorandum of Agreement

It was the week before Christmas. The reception area of the TADS offices, with its holiday decorations, reflected the warm atmosphere associated with the season. Next door, in the conference room, several of the staff had gathered to discuss and ratify a proposed technical assistance memorandum of agreement between TADS and Project Co-Op.

Two weeks earlier, Jay Arbey and the TADS associate director for demonstration projects had met with Alan Adams at the HCEEP directors' meeting in Washington. Alan had shared with them his feelings about problems he thought the needs assessment process had created for him and for the project. The problems were in two areas: the financial and procedural arrangements for staff members to attend the off-site workshop, and the identification of communication problems between Alan and Jean Sellers and among the staff. Alan had reported a marked improvement in communication, and the three had explored various

possibilities for resolving the problems so that off-site training would be of most use to the project. Jay reported to the TADS staff that he hoped he and the associate director had been supportive of Alan. There appeared to have been resolution of the issues, and Jay believed that Alan now had a generally positive feeling about TADS.

Jay described Project Co-Op's background for his colleagues, answering questions about the organizational relationships between the college and the school system. He outlined some of the potential impact that administrative decisions about implementing the concept of "least restrictive environment" might have on technical assistance. The TADS evaluation specialist explained the JDRP approval priority as it related to the original project proposal. Jay reported that judging from his most recent conversation with Alan Adams, Alan no longer placed JDRP quite as high on his priority list, although it was still important to him.

In response to questions from his colleagues, Jay said he didn't know why Alan had not been able to attend so many of the needs assessment sessions, but he understood that the staff had finally reached consensus. He reviewed the six technical assistance delivery methods proposed for the memorandum of agreement: one off-site consultation, one on-site consultation, and four information services. He explained that one of the information services already had been incorporated into the off-site workshop, and discussed available TADS materials that might be of help to the project with their three other information needs. The session ended with ratification of five technical assistance needs, essentially as developed during the needs assessment, but modified in wording on the basis of subsequent discussions with Alan Adams (see Figure 6).

Technical Assistance Need	Content Area	Method of Delivery
1. Assistance in planning for the movement of project classrooms for severely/profoundly handicapped students to a less restrictive environment, e.g., regular public school facilities	Services to children	Information service
2. Assistance in developing a coherent curriculum for the program	Services to children	On-site consultation
3. Assistance in assessing and providing for the pre-speech, language stimulation, and feeding needs of low-functioning children	Staff development	Off-site consultation
4. Assistance in identifying instruments for the summative assessment of young severely/profoundly handicapped students	Evaluation	Information service
5. Assistance in measuring parent satisfaction with services provided to their children by Project Co-Op	Evaluation	Information service

Figure 6. Summary of Project Co-Op's memorandum of agreement

Technical Assistance Events

Off-Site Consultation

It was Washington's Birthday, and Bill Anderson planned to spend the day at Project Co-Op. Martha Bryson and Sandy Dawes had just returned from a week-long off-site workshop that had been provided to meet the project's third technical assistance need. The workshop had focused on techniques for dealing with certain medical restrictions of severely/profoundly handicapped infants in order to reach educational goals, and Bill was eager to hear the teachers' reactions.

Although the workshop had not provided exactly what they had wanted or expected, both Martha and Sandy had generally positive feelings about the experience, especially its format and organization. They told Bill that a good theoretical base had been presented, although for Martha it was repetitious of previously acquired information. In retrospect, both would have preferred to spend more time on practical concerns--what to do rather than why to do it.

Martha and Sandy reported the reaction of other project staff as "What are we going to get out of this?" In response, Sandy had already begun to work with her co-teacher of infants, Cynthia Lee, and both Sandy and Martha planned more formal work with other staff in a few days. A workshop consultant from the program they had visited was to come to Project Co-Op in April for the second phase of training, and Sandy was to return for a follow-up workshop in May.

In response to Bill's questions about the overall value of such off-site consultations, both Martha and Sandy endorsed participation of

other staff in similar sessions. They believed that such activities could have a major impact on the project's curriculum.

Interlude I. Bill was meeting with Alan Adams, since he had some time left following his session with Martha and Sandy. Alan reflected on his reactions to the needs assessment held in November, and its influence on the project. He still believed the needs assessment had caused some problems. At the least, he said, he should have had a pre-assessment conference with Sharon to clarify the way the sessions were to be handled and to exchange personal agendas. Acknowledging that the communication problems were being addressed as a result of the needs assessment, Alan cited as examples the establishment of more specific role definitions and the revision of staff-meeting structure. In fact, Alan had employed some of the needs assessment procedures in developing the new role definitions for the staff.

Some revisions to the technical assistance agreement had been made or were in process, Bill learned. Need #1, for information regarding least restrictive environments, had been cancelled due to changes in the school system's priorities. The focus for the on-site consultation on curriculum development (Need #2) had been expanded, and negotiations were under way with a consultant selected by the project.

As their meeting concluded, Bill thanked Alan for spending this time with him. He was glad to learn of Project Co-Op's progress, and said he looked forward to hearing more of their work when he returned for his next visit.

Interlude II. Bill Anderson was especially looking forward to this visit to Project Co-Op because he had recently learned of Sandy Dawes' appointment to the position of project coordinator. (Jean Sellers had resigned that position, but she continued to have regular contact with the project through her other duties with the school system.) Bill was anxious to hear how Sandy was managing to serve as project coordinator while continuing her assignment as a teacher of infants.

During their meeting, Sandy acknowledged having some misgivings. This was her first administrative position, and she was cautious about her acceptance in that role by her colleagues. She was particularly anxious to transmit as much as possible of her off-site training experience to other staff members; she was concerned that its impact on the project might be lost if she were to leave. Sandy was positive about the potential of Project Co-Op, however, and was looking forward to the coming weeks and months, even anticipating the kinds of technical assistance that might be required. She was glad that her new role gave the project a full-time administrator at the site.

When Alan Adams joined Sandy and Bill, they discussed the technical assistance agreement. Bill had learned during an earlier visit that one of the five activities, an information need regarding feeding and pre-speech included in the off-site workshop, had been cancelled. A second early information need had been fulfilled by Jay Arbey, with assistance from other TADS staff members. The report from TADS in response to the third information need on parent measures had been received by the project just a week ago. Neither Alan nor Sandy had read the material yet; it was being reviewed by Martha Bryson, who was responsible for the work

to which the information applied most directly. The off-site workshop activity had been completed with Sandy's attendance at the follow-up session. The on-site consultation on the topic of curriculum development had been the subject of several discussions between Alan and Jay Arbey during the preceding months. It was now scheduled for la[illegible] July.

Alan now reflected on the technical assistance process, and on Project Co-Op's work with TADS over the year. He still felt that the needs assessment had caused problems which only now were being resolved. Although not related directly to those problems, Alan said he would have preferred an assessor who was expertly informed about programs for severely/profoundly handicapped children, who could have assisted the staff in identifying specific project needs. He repeated his earlier call for a pre-assessment conference between the project director and the needs assessor. He also suggested that the project director and a TADS staff member should work together and become well acquainted before the needs assessment was scheduled, especially for new projects.

Despite these earlier problems, Alan now had a favorable response to TADS and its potential benefits for his project. He was especially positive in his comments about his working relationship with Jay Arbey, and spoke appreciatively of Jay's willingness to be supportive and flexible in implementing the technical assistance agreement.

In commenting about some project administrative matters, Alan reported two occurrences that were having an impact on the project's direction. One was a school-system decision that effectively slowed down the move toward the least restrictive environment for severely/profoundly handicapped children. The other was a decision by the

college which required a substantial increase in the overhead rate applied to project funds. This would have required some revisions to the project, but Alan had been successful in securing a reversal of that decision. At the same time, Alan reported, he had been able to secure higher salary classifications for project staff.

Later, Bill met with Martha Bryson and Sandy, who discussed their experiences at the off-site workshop and described plans for follow-up work with their colleagues. Sandy had not yet had a chance to talk with Martha about her follow-up workshop, and a time was set for them to get together.

Bill had informal conversations with other staff during his walk through the school. He found that the only impression most staff had of technical assistance was of the November needs assessment. They knew, of course, that Sandy and Martha had participated in an off-site training workshop and that a workshop consultant had visited the project. The information needs activities did not apply to them directly, and the on-site consultation activity had not yet been announced.

Bill concluded his visit by meeting briefly again with Alan and Sandy. They said they hoped the case study would continue, and looked forward to Bill's attendance at the July workshop.

On-Site Consultation

It was a sunny, cloudless day in late July. Just perfect, thought Ursula, for walking across a college campus and admiring the trees and shrubs. She was looking for the building where she was to meet Alan Adams and begin her three-day workshop with the staff of Project Co-Op. Ursula and Alan had met a few days earlier to discuss Alan's specific expectations for the workshop, which had two basic objectives: assistance in curriculum development, and assistance with techniques for conducting formative evaluations. Jay Arbey had told Ursula that her selection as consultant had been mutually agreed upon by Jay and Alan because of her extensive experience, both as a researcher and a practitioner, with the type of clientele, especially infants, served by Project Co-Op. Ursula Todd was director of a project, located in another state, that was very similar to Project Co-Op in terms of clientele and administrative structure. Her project also had just completed its first year of operation, and Ursula looked forward to comparing notes.

Both Alan and Ursula arrived at the conference room early enough to review their previously made plans and to resolve last-minute procedural questions. Then Alan introduced Ursula to the project staff as they arrived for the first workshop session: Sandy Dawes, Cynthia Lee, Anne Newton, Sue Wilson, Ken Stevens, and Marilyn Thompson who, like Ken, was a university graduate student serving as a project evaluator. Jean Sellers also attended the meeting, since she was a school-system staff member responsible for special education programs.

Ursula opened the meeting by outlining her philosophy and citing

several principles she thought were important considerations when working with infants. She moved more specifically into a description of the project she directed, its environment, and the population it served. Alan and the project staff posed a number of questions about Ursula's project, and noted both its similarities with and differences from Project Co-Op. Next, Ursula described in more detail her project's curriculum and the rationale for its use. She also illustrated the forms used for gathering data, and discussed several evaluation issues, such as the validity of instruments and the types of variables that should be measured.

Then it was Ursula's turn to listen as the Project Co-Op staff described their program for her. Sandy Dawes presented a broad overview of the project and showed Ursula the materials used for describing Project Co-Op to the public and other professionals. She noted particular areas which she hoped would be covered by the workshop. Sue Wilson led a discussion about record-keeping methods; she was followed by Cynthia Lee, who described the objectives system used during the first year. Finally, Alan outlined another objectives system that was planned for the second year of project operation, and noted the reasons it was considered to be more appropriate for meeting Project Co-Op's needs.

The discussion turned next to the parent/staff training form, what was done with the data collected, and how it related to other project data. Anne Newton described the parent involvement plan used by the project, and led a discussion concerning its use. The session concluded with an outline of problems encountered early in the year and how they were resolved. Throughout, Ursula listened attentively and, from time

to time, asked questions about project approaches.

Following a mid-morning break, Ursula met with Anne Newton, Sue Wilson, Sandy Dawes, and Jean Sellers to begin discussing in more detail the issues raised earlier. Among the topics they covered was the means for making data procedures/activities/forms more useful for both the curriculum and evaluation. Ursula frequently offered suggestions and comments to clarify staff concerns. She encouraged them to look closely at the forms they used, but to feel free to vary them if needed to make them more appropriate. In response to Jean's question about the integration of new staff members into the project, Ursula outlined the plans her own project had for accomplishing this. She used such references to her own or others' experiences often when responding to the staff's questions. Hearing specific and concrete examples of solutions achieved by others for problems similar to their own seemed to strike a responsive chord in the four participants. Throughout the session, Ursula was encouraging and supportive, attempting always to give answers that were as satisfactory as possible.

During the afternoon, Ursula met with Ken Stevens, Marilyn Thompson, Alan Adams, and Sandy Dawes. Their initial discussion centered on summative evaluation measures, with Ursula outlining those used in her project. Later, the topic shifted to formative evaluation measures and lengthy discussion of the nature of baseline data. Ursula answered a number of specific questions concerning the reliability of data collected by parents, and the handling of various evaluation issues with project staff. There was considerable discussion on the philosophy of working with young children, especially infants, and the evaluation

problems that can arise as a result of operating from different philosophic bases. The session was intense, both in breadth and depth, and highly interactive. On the few occasions when discussion seemed to wander, Ursula reoriented the group to the task at hand through supportive and humorous comments. The afternoon session ended with Alan and Ursula jointly presenting an informal summary.

The next day, Sandy took Ursula on a series of visits to the homes of infants enrolled in the project. School was closed for a brief vacation, but the twice-weekly home visits by classroom teachers, a regular part of the infant program, continued. En route to each home, Sandy described the family environment and outlined the child's handicapping condition. In responding to questions asked by Ursula, Sandy occasionally noted some area of concern for which she hoped the consultant would provide advice.

Each of the mothers had been notified that Ursula (and Bill) would be accompanying Sandy that day, so introductions could be brief. In each case, the mother succinctly described her child's condition, using professional language with ease. Ursula observed as Sandy and the mother worked together with the child, often asking questions and commenting on the child's apparent developmental stage. (Chronologically, the children ranged in age from just under one year to almost two years.) Ursula noted specific points about which she commented positively to the mothers, and she complimented each on her interactions with her child. From time to time, especially after one visit and while on the way to the next, Ursula talked with Sandy about various curriculum and evaluation matters as they related to the child just observed. On

occasion, she confirmed Sandy's statements about the child's development; sometimes she offered differing opinions, or suggestions about how to assist the child and mother more effectively.

The third day of consultation began with a review of workshop activities to that point and an outline of topics remaining to be considered in more detail. This meeting, with Alan Adams and Sandy Dawes, covered in depth such issues as programming for generic skills as compared to programming for developmental milestones. Attention was given to specific activities for children at home and at school. Lengthy consideration was given to related data-collection procedures.

Their discussion continued as the group drove from the college to Oak Ridge School so that Ursula could view the school's physical operation. While moving from room to room, Ursula commented on various items of classroom equipment, asking questions and making suggestions.

When the group returned to the college campus for a final session, they were joined by Anne Newton. The participants agreed they would like to keep in touch with Ursula and her project, to follow up on the curriculum issues covered during the workshop and to give added attention to the "least restrictive environment"--what it means to integrate young handicapped children with their peers and/or with older children, whether handicapped or not.

In reviewing the purposes of the consultation and its results, the staff agreed that they had moved through the evaluation concerns rather quickly and had reached a satisfactory level of closure. They noted that both Ursula's project and Project Co-Op were doing much the same thing with formative evaluation measures. Curriculum concerns had

burgeoned throughout the consultation, and the staff believed Ursula had helped focus their direction more clearly.

Finally, the group agreed that although the technical assistance agreement activity just completed was essentially the same broad topic that had been anticipated during the needs assessment, there were differences in substance. The professional growth of the staff, and the evolution in their thinking about curriculum since the project had begun, had contributed considerably to the success of the workshop. As a result of the consultation, it would be easier to integrate new staff members into the project. Because the workshop had been held several months later than originally planned, it had produced a level of discussion that was far more sophisticated, and therefore far more useful, than would have been possible at the earlier time.

Epilogue

Bill Anderson was meeting with Jay Arbey for an informal review of Project Co-Op from Jay's perspective. He remembered Jay's earlier expectations for building a good working relationship with Alan Adams, and was anxious to hear how that relationship had developed.

Jay reported, first, that his initial hope that the project would have a real partnership with the college had been modified somewhat over the months. The differing priorities of the college and the school system had necessarily tempered what he had hoped might be a more intimate inter-agency relationship. For example, college staff had as a project goal a rapid move toward "least restrictive environment" (LRE) principles for the children in the project. On the other hand, the school system, looking at LRE from an operational standpoint, thought more time would be required to implement that goal.

Although he regretted the misunderstandings that had grown out of the needs assessment process, Jay felt that they had been largely overcome during the year. The meeting between TADS staff and Alan Adams at the HCEEP directors' meeting had represented a particularly positive contribution to improving the relationship between TADS and the project.

Regarding his working relationship with Alan, Jay reported that he had had not only routine correspondence but many telephone conversations that had, indeed, helped to develop a strong, positive working relationship. On several occasions, Alan had called Jay just to chat about the project and share its progress. Jay was pleased, also, that TADS had been able to demonstrate its flexibility in responding to the project's technical assistance needs by altering the initial agreement and

by arranging for Ursula Todd's consultation to take place during the summer.

As he summarized the year's events for Bill, Jay expressed satisfaction that early problems had been resolved and that there were good working relationships both between TADS and the project and, on a more personal level, between himself and Alan Adams. Jay believed that Project Co-Op's technical assistance needs had been responded to productively, and he looked forward to a continued good relationship during the second year of the project.

SECTION V

THE RESULTS: A SUMMARY OF THE "LEARNINGS"

Previous sections of this report introduced the purpose and development of the case study, described its context, and outlined the conceptual model that guided the observers and TADS staff through the process. Reports were presented of the observations of technical assistance provided for two demonstrations projects in their first year of operation.

The goal of the case study was to provide information about the process of technical assistance. The vehicle used to attain the goal was multiple observations and interviews at two project sites, and the gathering of information concerning TADS, the projects, the technical assistance events, and the outcomes of technical assistance. The case reports provided a great deal of information concerning technical assistance, particularly those aspects pertaining to the project staffs and the providers of technical assistance. Use of a story-telling method allowed the reader to view the delivery of technical assistance from the points of view of the observers, the providers, and the clients.

Before proceeding with the discussion, several basic cautions should be stated. First, the observations were confined to two, first-year projects, a sample that does not permit generalizations. Second, as a result of their prior experience and orientation, the observers had well-established personal values and biases which may be reflected in the case reports. Third, as comprehensive as the reports may be, they cannot represent a total picture of the projects or of the technical assistance provided to them. Fourth, because the study was conceived initially as a one-year study, with a strong focus on the characteristics of participants and their relationship to the process, there is more

information about the characteristics of clients and providers than about technical assistance events and their outcomes or effects. As a result of these cautions, the discussion must be viewed as exploratory and tentative. Issues and questions which emerge are for further investigation and thought; they must not be considered as "truth." It is easy to jump to conclusions in many instances of everyday life; it is even easier to do so with descriptive case reports.

At the outset of the study, the TADS staff and observers developed four questions to guide the investigation:

1. What client characteristics affect technical assistance?
2. What technical assistance provider characteristics affect the technical assistance?
3. What characteristics of the technical assistance events themselves influence the assistance?
4. What are the outcomes, effects, and/or impacts of technical assistance?

At the end of the year, the TADS staff and observers reviewed the case study information and developed a set of preliminary responses to the questions. To accomplish this task: (a) the TADS professional staff reviewed the cases and located specific information which provided insight into the questions; (b) the observers summarized the data along additional areas of investigation--organizational dynamics, competencies and experience of personnel, and expectations; these additional data were integrated into the discussion of the questions.

In order to organize the data into a systematic framework, the findings were arranged into categories. In some cases, subcategories were developed; they are presented alphabetically, in most instances--inferences about their relative importance are left to the reader.

Question 1: What Client Characteristics Affect Technical Assistance?

Data concerning client characteristics were organized into two major groups: (a) project organization/administration/leadership, and (b) project staff. Each group contains several subcategories.

Project Organization/Administration/Leadership

Analysis of the information related to this broad category led to the development of nine subcategories. Each is described briefly.

Administrative autonomy. Autonomy, or the extent to which project leadership has the authority to make decisions and exercise control over the project, appeared to be an important factor affecting technical assistance. In Project Early Start, for example, where there were several layers of administration and the chain of command was not completely clear, the project coordinator (Bud Fisher) was not in a position to make all of the final decisions in planning for technical assistance. This caused conflict, both during planning and in restructuring original plans (e.g., the evaluation consultation). In contrast, the director of Project Co-Op (Alan Adams) had, and exercised, authority to make final decisions regarding most aspects of the project and all aspects of technical assistance.

Attitude/enthusiasm toward the project. The attitude of project administration and leaders toward their project seemed to affect the technical assistance, at least indirectly. In Project Co-Op, Alan Adams had authored the proposal; he was committed and enthusiastic, and he was

forceful in expressing the project's needs and his own opinions about technical assistance. Delivery of services at a beneficial time for the project was of the essence to him. This concern was expressed early in his relationship with TADS, and was attended to by the TADS technical assistance coordinator (Jay Arbey).

Attitude/enthusiasm toward technical assistance. In both projects, the climate surrounding provision of technical assistance appeared to affect the outcome. In Project Co-Op, Alan Adams' early dissatisfaction with the needs assessment required considerable time and energy from TADS to straighten out problems, rebuild the relationship, and generate support for technical assistance. By the end of the year, the successful on-site consultation on curriculum could be conducted in an atmosphere of interest and cooperation. In Project Early Start, Bud Fisher often expressed a concern that his needs were not really being met. He was not satisfied with technical assistance until TADS staff member Henry Hobbs provided concrete answers to his questions.

Awareness of needs. Failure to articulate and meet "real" needs appeared to affect technical assistance throughout the year, and certainly to influence opinions of its success. For example, Bud Fisher repeatedly stated during the year that he was not sure Project Early Start's actual needs were identified, although he was satisfied with the technical assistance that was provided. At the same time, the providers of the technical assistance, such as Henry Hobbs, were expressing concern that Bud had not crystallized his perceptions regarding the needs of the project.

Communication practices. Communication practices in the administration and management of both projects directly affected technical assistance. In Project Co-Op, the early identification of a local "communications problem" during the needs assessment caused Alan Adams to be quite dissatisfied with TADS and to take some local administrative actions to alleviate the problem. In Project Early Start's needs assessment, discussion regarding project status in the area of administration revealed there was limited communication among administrators. This led to conflict which the needs assessor had to attempt to resolve before the needs assessment could be completed.

Expectations for technical assistance. Administrative expectations appeared, in both projects, to have influenced both the technical assistance process and its outcomes. Alan Adams' expectations for the needs assessment were not expressed directly to Project Co-Op staff, to TADS, or to the needs assessor prior to the event, and they were not met. The resulting conflict during the needs assessment led to Alan's opinion that the event had caused problems for the project. The final consultation did meet his expectations, however; he was satisfied with this event and became more supportive of TADS. In Project Early Start, Bud Fisher's expectation that technical assistance would provide an evaluation of the project was not met, and he was disappointed with much of the technical assistance he received.

Involvement in technical assistance. This subcategory includes the administrator's active participation and/or leadership in preparing staff for technical assistance, following through on activities after the

event, and providing adequate facilities and staff time for productive participation and involvement. In both projects, the facilities provided for the needs assessment were comfortable, making the work easier for all participants. On the other hand, both leadership and staff time were limited during the needs assessments, perhaps providing a fragmented experience and preventing a full awareness and expression of needs.

Leadership style. A continuing thread running through both cases was the influence of the leadership style employed by project administrators. In Project Co-Op, Alan Adams considered himself to be the final decision-maker, and he resented the needs assessor's use of participatory decision-making with the entire staff. This led eventually to a productive clarification of staff roles and responsibilities, but in the meantime, Alan expressed resentment at TADS procedures that were in conflict with his leadership style. In Project Early Start, the director (Matt) appeared to exercise directive leadership, but his involvement in the project was limited due to other responsibilities. The leadership style that seemed most comfortable for Bud Fisher was non-directive. The differences in the two leadership styles may have contributed to the somewhat loosely focused and changeable on-site technical assistance in evaluation.

Role/responsibility differentiation. The differentiation and clarification of leadership roles and responsibilities influenced the technical assistance. Some evidence of a failure to define administrative roles and responsibilities is available in Project Early Start, where it was unclear who had what decision-making responsibilities for

the project and for the technical assistance. It appeared that roles and responsibilities were unclear or unstated, causing unnecessary problems that deflected staff time and energy from productive use of the technical assistance.

Project Staff

As might be expected, some categories for project staff were similar to those developed for project administration/organization/leadership. In most cases, however, the effects on technical assistance appeared to be somewhat different. Seven subcategories are described briefly.

Attitude/enthusiasm toward the project. The case studies could not begin to portray the full range of attitudes of project staff members; however, glimpses show that positive attitudes and enthusiasm appeared to affect technical assistance. A notable example is the positive attitude of Project Co-Op's staff during the on-site consultation by Ursula Todd. Reflected in the case description is an enthusiasm for their work and a positive attitude toward the project that could only enhance the technical assistance.

Expectations for technical assistance. Little information is available from either case regarding staff expectations for technical assistance prior to the event. What is available is related to unmet expectations for some services. For example, staff members of Project Early Start appeared to be disappointed that they were not more fully involved in the needs assessment process; apparently they had been led to expect that they would have more input into development of the technical

assistance agreement. For individual technical assistance events, there is some evidence that expectations were not always met, as was the case with Project Co-Op's off-site consultation. However, to the extent that satisfaction was observed or reported to the case observer, project staffs appeared to be satisfied with technical assistance as it was provided directly for them.

Staff experience and training. Examples from both cases suggest that the level of staff experience and/or training can affect technical assistance. Because Project Early Start's staff had limited previous experience with, and some concrete concerns about, working with severely disabled children and their parents, staff development became a technical assistance need. In Project Co-Op, the extent of training and experience affected the perceptions of the participants regarding the success of the off-site workshop. For one, the workshop was useful; for the other, much of the workshop repeated previously learned information and was not, therefore, as useful as she had hoped it would be.

Involvement in technical assistance. Staff involvement begins prior to the needs assessment, and includes participation in planning, delivery, and follow-up for technical assistance. Several examples of varying staff involvement are found in the description of Project Early Start. During the needs assessment, part of the staff were excluded from the development of the technical assistance agreement on the second day. Only Matt and Bud were included in the technical assistance in evaluation. The staff development technical assistance was attended by Bud, Helen, and Phil; the classroom teachers who were responsible for working

with the children were not included. In Project Co-Op, the entire staff was involved in the needs assessment, but at different times. For other technical assistance events, only two teachers were involved in the off-site workshop and it was not until the consultation on curriculum in July that the entire staff was again involved. Comments from staff members of both projects displayed their lack of knowledge of technical assistance and its effects when they were not personally involved.

Knowledge/awareness of the project. When technical assistance is focused on helping a project reach its goals, as is the case with TADS, the technical assistance may be influenced at least indirectly by the level of the staff's understanding of the project and its purpose. There is evidence, for example, that Project Early Start's staff did not have an understanding of the model demonstration aspects of their project, and of the consequent need to focus efforts on demonstration and dissemination. The result was a need for information and explanations of this aspect of the project. Such explanations appeared to have been beneficial in creating staff knowledge, enthusiasm, and support for model demonstration efforts.

Staff communication. Both cases provide data to suggest that staff communication patterns and problems can directly affect technical assistance. The Project Co-Op needs assessor encouraged open sharing of ideas and concerns, and strongly attempted to create a safe, democratic environment. The staff responded with statements of their concerns and needs, allowing the needs assessor to bring into the open topics that had not been discussed previously. Later in the year, the efforts of

of Project Co-Op staff members to communicate the results of their off-site training were evident, and their concern for communication made this technical assistance useful to other staff. In Project Early Start, there was little evidence of communication about technical assistance. For example, staff members were not informed of the staff development plan or of the technical assistance in evaluation.

Work pressure/time availability. This category was developed to describe the "push and pull" observed when project staff tried to participate in technical assistance while fulfilling their regular duties. In each case, staff could not devote time to technical assistance and children simultaneously, and the benefits derived from the technical assistance were affected.

Summary

The reader may himself have identified other client characteristics than those presented here. The dimensions and levels of the characteristics and their effects on technical assistance may vary, but it seems reasonable to state that client characteristics can, indeed, affect technical assistance. One might hope that further study of this topic can delineate more fully the relationships that exist between the characteristics of clients and the outcomes of technical assistance.

Question 2: What Technical Assistance Provider Characteristics Affect the Technical Assistance?

Data concerning the characteristics of the providers of technical assistance have been organized into three major categories: (a) the TADS organization, (b) the technical assistance consultants, and (c) the technical assistance coordinators. As with Question 1, each major category contains several subcategories.

The TADS Organization

The analysis of information for this category provided two subcategories. Each is described below.

TADS design for providing assistance. TADS has a well-established design for technical assistance, with specific and systematic guidelines and procedures for delivering services to clients. The sequence of procedures is: (a) program planning, (b) needs assessment, (c) negotiating the technical assistance agreement, (d) delivery of technical assistance (by consultants and/or TADS staff), and (e) evaluation of the technical assistance. Routine and systematic procedures move each client through the five steps. Providing specific technical assistance services also involves routine procedures, which are designed to: (a) arrange for the technical assistance events, (b) help both consultants and clients prepare for the technical assistance, and (c) monitor the success of the technical assistance.

Evidence is provided throughout the cases that these procedures were used, and that they affected the technical assistance. All of the events occurred as planned. The routine procedures produced numerous

communication points at which both positive and negative feedback could be provided to the TADS coordinators. These contacts did much to maintain a positive working relationship between TADS and the clients, even when some individual events proved not to be entirely satisfactory to the clients. Three major factors were identified as being especially important in the delivery of technical assistance. They are described below.

1. Needs assessment management and use: Historically, needs assessment has been a central and critical event in TADS' design for technical assistance. Most early interactions between TADS and a client point toward this event, and virtually all subsequent activities are shaped by it. The central importance of the needs assessment was demonstrated in both case reports. Although specific plans and timelines changed over time, the needs addressed and the basic technical assistance plans remained as they had been developed during the needs assessment.

For both projects, the needs assessment proved to be a technical assistance event in and of itself; that is, the clients made further use of the comprehensive program review and planning dimensions of the process. Each project cited several changes that occurred in project operations as a result of the needs assessment. For Project Early Start the changes included: starting IEP conferences that included parents, improving communications between staff and parents, increasing communication and support of school administration, increasing involvement of the social worker in the classroom, making real progress in resolving organizational and

leadership conflicts, completing written job descriptions, and the resignation of one staff member by mutual agreement. For Project Co-Op, the needs assessment resulted in the addressing of staff communication problems by establishing more specific role definitions, and revising the structure of staff meetings. Indeed, some of the needs assessment procedures were used by the project in developing the new role definitions. In both projects, the needs assessment caused existing organizational problems to surface, be acknowledged, and be dealt with openly for the first time.

The needs assessment created lasting impressions and attitudes in the clients in a way that affected all of the technical assistance they received. It is clear that Alan Adams' relationship with TADS was colored for the entire year, to some extent, by the negative aspects of his needs assessment experience. Bud Fisher continued to seek the opinion of an outside expert on the quality of his project, something he had hoped to resolve during the needs assessment. In his subsequent technical assistance services, he remained somewhat unsure that his project was focusing on its real needs.

2. Use of outside consultants: The case studies provide several examples of how this aspect of TADS' design can influence technical assistance. In Project Early Start, TADS' willingness to provide an outside evaluation consultant chosen by the project resolved Matt's concerns over the evaluation technical assistance need. As that need was subsequently addressed, TADS' ability to identify and employ a local evaluation consultant made it possible to provide the technical assistance through a series of visits rather than one.

For both projects, TADS was able to provide their first choice of consultant for technical assistance in staff development. Both projects subsequently prepared well for these events.

3. Free technical assistance: This characteristic of TADS' design certainly appeared to affect technical assistance. As Bud Fisher acknowledged, "there were no barriers" to technical assistance as long as "the school wasn't paying for it." The fact that the amount of TADS' funding available to any client is limited also affected the technical assistance. Some decisions were made in order to make the most of the limited resources. In Project Early Start, the decision to use a local evaluation consultant minimized travel costs and allowed TADS to provide more direct consultation time to the project.

In Project Co-Op, the allocation of TADS funds affected technical assistance near the close of the needs assessment, as priorities were being determined. (When a project's total needs are more than TADS can support financially, the setting of priorities determines which needs will be financially supported by TADS. This circumstance contributed to Project Co-Op's difficulties in agreeing upon their need priorities.) The technical assistance need for Sandy and Martha to attend an off-site workshop had been identified prior to the needs assessment; plans already had been made for the event, but at the staff members' own expense. If this need were to be given the highest priority, the implication would be that TADS would pay for the training. At the same time, the staff development need in designing curriculum improvements also required a significant

outlay of funds. Since it appeared unlikely that TADS could afford to underwrite both needs completely, the setting of priorities had financial implications for some of the staff, and perhaps would determine whether the curriculum need could be addressed at all. The final priorities placed the curriculum need higher than the off-site training, with both needs being included in the project's memorandum of agreement. The financial and procedural arrangements for the off-site training were subsequently resolved by Jay Arbey; nevertheless, the issue of what needs would be paid for by TADS clearly affected both the needs assessment process and the technical assistance negotiation process for Project Co-Op.

TADS' philosophical approach. TADS employs an approach to technical assistance that is responsive to project needs, non-evaluative, non-directive, and flexible. It is obvious from the case descriptions that the consultants and TADS staff members adhered to this approach in providing technical assistance. Hints can be found in the cases that there may have been an occasional conflict between the desires of project administrators and TADS' style. For example, in Project Early Start, Bud Fisher repeatedly asked for evaluation of his project; no consultant or TADS staff member provided this for him. In Project Co-Op, the needs assessor was consistently non-directive in conducting the needs assessment; the project director was not satisfied with the outcome. On the other hand, there were many occasions on which responsiveness and flexibility were appreciated; as, for example, when arrangements were made for the on-site consultation by Ursula Todd.

Technical Assistance Consultants

Included in this category are the consultants and the TADS staff members who work with projects in the direct provision of technical assistance. Analysis of the data revealed eight subcategories which are presented below.

Attitude/enthusiasm toward the client. This trait is manifested in respect for the clients, continued interest in their progress, and observable enthusiasm for them and their work. It was most noticeable in the case descriptions in Project Early Start's needs assessment and Project Co-Op's consultation from Ursula Todd. A positive attitude was observed by the project staffs and appeared to result in their increased involvement in the technical assistance.

Expertise and experience in content area. The consultants' professional expertise and experience are core elements of technical assistance. In the case reports, project staff were particularly responsive to Roger Pearson and Ursula Todd because they were able to share their knowledge and work effectively.

Consultation skills. Among the skills described for the consultants in both cases are listening, creating a safe environment, resolving conflicts, eliciting discussions, and involving the entire group in the activity. In Project Early Start, the needs assessor exercised skill in resolving the conflict over need priorities, enabling successful completion of the needs assessment. Roger Pearson, the staff development consultant, listened to the staff, asked probing questions, and developed a discussion that provided much new information for project staff.

Credibility. It appeared that high credibility may have a positive impact both on selection of consultants and on provision of technical assistance. Using Roger Pearson and Ursula Todd as examples, their credibility had been well established, and their advice and suggestions were well received by project staffs.

Flexibility. Flexibility can have many dimensions; for example, the ability to play different roles, to change agendas and timelines to meet unexpected needs, and to adapt approaches to consultation to fit new circumstances. In Project Early Start, Sally Johnson was willing to provide the evaluation technical assistance in short consultations over a long period of time, thus meeting Bud Fisher's administrative needs. Both needs assessors had to adjust their procedures to meet unexpected schedule changes. All consultants were described in the case reports as playing different roles during the technical assistance, with each new role facilitating the process.

Interpersonal skills. Descriptors in this category which are evident from the cases are friendly, open, sensitive, and courteous. While there is a close tie between interpersonal and communication skills, the actual personality of the consultant plays its own important role. Descriptions in both cases indicate that the consultants possessed good interpersonal skills, and that as a result they were generally well liked and well received.

Knowledge of TADS and HCEEP. This category was developed to include such items as the ability to speak with authority for TADS, to understand TADS procedures, and to know HCEEP rules and regulations. In both cases,

project staff asked consultants for further explanations of TADS procedures and/or the HCEEP program. As a result of the information provided by the consultants, the staff appeared to have a better understanding of technical assistance and of the overall purpose and mission of their projects. One exception, which had a short-term negative impact, was the needs assessor's inability to speak for TADS about the planning of technical assistance for Project Co-Op, especially in resolving the question of who was to pay for the off-site workshop.

Preparation for technical assistance. This category includes a knowledge of the project and the purpose of the technical assistance as well as adequate information and materials. In almost all of the technical assistance described in the cases, there is evidence that the consultants had some familiarity with the project (e.g., they had read the project proposal and had talked with the TADS coordinator before beginning their work with the project). This appeared to ease their entry into the project and provided information they could use to initiate discussions.

Technical Assistance Coordinators

Technical assistance coordinators are the major contacts among projects, TADS staff, and consultants. They are responsible for managing technical assistance delivery, including the planning and preparation for each technical assistance event. Six subcategories were developed to describe the data presented in the cases regarding TADS coordinators.

Attitude/enthusiasm toward the client. The overall attitude and

expression of enthusiasm of the TADS coordinators toward clients is described for both cases. In Project Early Start, Carol Turner exhibited a strong working knowledge of the project, and a willingness to assist the project in any way to meet their needs. In Project Co-Op, Jay Arbey worked to build a strong, positive relationship with Alan Adams and was enthusiastic about the project's potential.

Coordination skills. Included in this category are such items as helping consultants to prepare for providing technical assistance, the ability to work with many projects at once, knowledge of available resources, personal availability to clients, and responsiveness to project requests. Evidence from the cases reveals that both Carol Turner and Jay Arbey had these skills, although the results of their work varied. For example, in Project Early Start, Carol Turner prepared the staff development consultant and Bud Fisher for technical assistance. The end result, however, did not address the technical assistance need identified in the memorandum of agreement (a staff development plan) in spite of her careful preparation. Although Bud and the staff seemed to enjoy and learn from the consultation, Bud was disappointed that a plan was not developed. In Project Co-Op, Jay Arbey worked for some time to plan and prepare for the on-site consultation by Ursula Todd, and in this case the outcome did address and meet the original need; in fact, it was of more benefit than had been anticipated. It is clear that each actor in the technical assistance must take some responsibility for successful completion of the consultation; the role of the TADS coordinator cannot be considered as the sole factor in success.

Flexibility. As defined in an earlier section, flexibility is the ability to play different roles, adapt approaches, and change agendas and timelines. Each case demonstrates that TADS coordinators exhibited these abilities, and that technical assistance was positively influenced by their flexible performance.

Interpersonal skills. Friendliness, openness, honesty, sensitivity, and courtesy are all important attributes for technical assistance coordinators, whose major communications with projects and consultants are by phone and mail. Each case presents data and clues that the TADS coordinators possessed and used these skills in their work, and that their interpersonal abilities influenced technical assistance in a positive manner.

Knowledge of the project. Both Carol Turner and Jay Arbey were fully informed of project proposals, goals and objectives, and ongoing needs. Careful attention to these matters appears to have enhanced their relationships with the projects and facilitated the planning and providing of assistance.

Responsiveness. This category includes timeliness of service delivery, quick response to telephone requests, and willingness to change plans to meet new needs. In Project Early Start, Carol Turner was willing to, and did, respond to client requests, although few were made. In Project Co-Op, Jay Arbey's careful attention to client needs and responsiveness to phone calls changed a rather negative TADS/client relationship to a more positive one.

Question 3: What Characteristics of the Technical Assistance Events Themselves Influence the Assistance?

Since the cases focused primarily on the characteristics of the technical assistance clients and providers and their interactions, there is much detail on those topics in the case descriptions. There is also information about the technical assistance events themselves, although it is not always so rich in detail. Descriptions are given of needs assessments, on-site consultations, a small group consultation, and an off-site consultation (through a retrospective report). Nine categories have been developed to discuss these events; they are presented in alphabetical order.

Amount of structure. The amount of structure that is built into the planning and process of a technical assistance event is reflected in the planning/provision system, which includes preparation of all participants, contact between participants, and follow-up. In Project Early Start, for example, the staff development consultation was carefully handled by Carol Turner, who insured that all participants received materials and information related to the focus of the consultation. Bud Fisher made in-house preparations for staff participation, meeting space, and lunch. Carol made follow-up phone calls to ascertain the results of the consultation and to assess the need for other materials or further assistance.

Structure affected the technical assistance aspects of both needs assessments, where the materials and procedures provided a vehicle for reviewing project status and identifying needs. Its influence was also

seen later, when both project administrators used the needs assessment as a model--one for defining roles and responsibilities, and the other for developing job descriptions. But there is also some evidence that firm structure can be detrimental. The large number of tasks to be completed in two days appeared to put some pressure on the needs assessors and project staffs to complete the process, and there are hints that other issues and concerns may not have been completely addressed because of the need for closure on the assessment process.

Communication. For any technical assistance event, communication is a necessary component in preparation, provision, and follow-up. In Project Early Start, Carol Turner questioned whether the project's needs had been communicated to Roger Pearson, the staff development consultant. (Later information revealed that they had been communicated but, for some reason, not attended to during the consultation.) In Project Co-Op, a breakdown in communication caused Alan Adams not to know that the TADS needs assessment materials and structure were to be used in a participatory manner with the staff. His reaction to discovering this during the process led to conflicts and to his opinion that the needs assessment had caused problems for the project.

Follow-up. This category highlights the follow-up activities of consultants, project staffs, and TADS coordinators. In Project Early Start, George (the needs assessor) sent follow-up materials to the project, and Bud returned from the small group consultation with plans for additional work in demonstration and dissemination. On the other hand, Roger Pearson's consultation was concluded without plans for

follow-up. In both projects, TADS coordinators made follow-up calls to assess the results of technical assistance and to determine the need for further assistance. The evidence suggests that these follow-up activities made possible the provision of additional technical assistance and helped to provide closure to the technical assistance events.

Involvement. Involvement is viewed here as operating on two levels: the actual presence or absence of individuals, and the level of participation of the persons who are present. During Project Co-Op's needs assessment, Alan Adams was absent for much of the time, and other staff members attended only periodically. All personnel participated in the process when possible, but the effects of periodic involvement were evident when the needs of staff and project director differed. In Project Early Start, variations in both availability and participation appeared to affect the process, and much flexibility was required to reach successful closure.

On the positive side, all Project Co-Op staff participated fully in the three-day on-site consultation in July. They appeared to become comfortable with the consultant and to be able to address and discuss all of their concerns and issues.

Preparation. This category was developed to highlight the effects of the level and extent of preparation for technical assistance. Preparatory activities of TADS coordinators are described in detail in the case reports. Both needs assessors are pictured as being well prepared and knowledgeable about the projects' purposes and goals. Project staff members had reviewed the needs assessment materials and given preliminary

thought to their own needs. In all cases, preparation appeared to enhance the technical assistance and allowed the process to flow smoothly toward accomplishment of tasks.

Relationship of technical assistance to the stated need. The technical assistance event is structured around a statement of need that is identified during the needs assessment and becomes part of the technical assistance agreement. The need is restated on preparation forms prior to the actual event. In Project Co-Op, all of the consultations appeared to address and meet the stated needs. In Project Early Start, on the other hand, this was not always the case. For example, the original need statement for evaluation was "Assistance in developing a comprehensive evaluation plan which measures the quality of services to high-risk infants and their parents." This statement was repeated in the preparatory paperwork for the technical assistance; however, the need actually was renegotiated by the project director and evaluation consultant as a need to "develop an instrument to measure mother-child interaction." The changed focus of consultation apparently met the needs of the project director, but TADS was unaware of the change until the end of the year. Thus, TADS had to deal with change after the fact, and staff members were somewhat disappointed at the breakdown in communication as well as the failure to develop an evaluation plan. A similar situation occurred during the staff development consultation when Roger Pearson provided an interesting and well-received day of information, but the coordinator was disappointed that the consultation did not result in a staff development plan. The level of attention paid to stated needs by all actors appears to have influenced the technical assistance received by the projects.

Relationship/match of consultant and project. The match between the project and the consultant has always been important to the TADS technical assistance process. In Project Early Start, George (the needs assessor) was able to play many roles during the assessment as different actors entered the picture with different needs and personal expectations. Roger Pearson, the staff development consultant, established a strong, positive relationship with the three staff members with whom he worked. In Project Co-Op, the non-directive style of the needs assessor may not have been the best match for the directive style of the project leader. The influence of this matching process appears to have had an important relationship with the outcome of technical assistance in both cases. The leadership and staff of Project Early Start appeared to be satisfied with both George and Roger; the director of Project Co-Op was dissatisfied with the needs assessor and continued to comment throughout the year that the needs assessment had caused problems for the project.

Scheduling of the event. Scheduling contains two elements: the scheduling of an event along the calendar year, and arranging the agenda for the event. Calendar-year scheduling is mentioned twice in the description of Project Co-Op; once where the director stated that he believed first-year needs assessments should be scheduled later in the year, and again when the staff commented that they were far more able to benefit from the July consultation than they would have been earlier in the year. Project Early Start's evaluation consultation was planned to cover a span of time so that an instrument could be developed; in actuality, this periodic scheduling did not appear to help.

Within events, personnel in both projects were reported to have

prepared for consultations by setting up agendas, planning breaks, and scheduling staff time. However, the fragmented scheduling of staff time for the Project Co-Op needs assessment caused problems in summarizing the process and determining the priority of needs. Thus the influence of scheduling factors is evident in both cases.

Types of technical assistance services. A variety of TADS services are presented in the case descriptions and background materials included in this study. Technical assistance was provided by both TADS staff and outside consultants. Delivery of services varied from the two-day needs assessment to off-site, on-site, and small group consultations as well as materials sent by mail and telephone conversations. It is clear from the case descriptions that the type of service can affect the technical assistance. In Project Early Start, the use of multiple, brief, on-site consultation spread over a period of time did not appear to have the desired effect. Instead, the director became less involved and neither the director nor the coordinator initiated preconsultation activities or reviewed materials sent to them ahead of time. In Project Co-Op, a mechanism appeared to be needed to facilitate the sharing of information received from off-site workshops with the total staff. On-site technical assistance (both needs assessments and consultations) involved the largest number of staff members and appeared to result in the most widespread influence on projects. These examples suggest that the type of technical assistance service affected the technical assistance itself. Factors influencing outcomes appeared to include the length of time between contacts, amount of staff involvement and amount of follow-up effort.

Question 4: What Are the Outcomes, Effects, and/or Impacts of Technical Assistance?

TADS provides technical assistance to HCEEP projects during the three years of their development. The extended influence of the learning that takes place and the cumulative nature of technical assistance causes the outcomes, effects, or impacts of technical assistance to be most obvious in later years of project operation. It is generally conceded, however, that some of the most important impacts occur or have their beginning in the first set of encounters between the agency and the client; e.g., establishing a positive relationship so that future activities may be successful (Lillie & Black, 1976). The set of outcomes or impacts observed in the cases described in this report were not expected to be as comprehensive as those of later years, but they are considered to be important and they may play a role in the success of future technical assistance. Analysis of the cases revealed primary impacts in five areas: (a) administration and leadership, (b) project staff, (c) communication, (d) program organization and clarification, and (e) program operation. In addition, there were other findings related to the outcomes of technical assistance; they are discussed in a final category of this section.

Administration and leadership. In both projects, the key role of administration and leadership was emphasized. While technical assistance was not provided directly to administrators, the nature of the process, particularly the needs assessment, resulted in primary impact on project leadership. In Project Early Start, Bud Fisher noted several effects of technical assistance: new information helped him make decisions; his

own and Matt's roles were clarified, and he became aware that he needed to change his leadership style to a more directive one.

In both projects, technical assistance resulted in a change in some administrative practices. In Project Early Start, the four administrators associated with the project began to hold weekly meetings to improve communication between the project and the school administration. In Project Co-Op, the structure of staff meetings was revised to enhance communication.

Finally, Project Early Start's staff members believed that the needs assessment had provided them with a clearer perspective of the administrative aspects of their project.

Project staff. In both cases, technical assistance affected staff roles. In Project Co-Op, Alan Adams reported that some of the needs assessment procedures had been used in developing new role definitions for staff. In Project Early Start, clarification of staff roles led Cynthia to an awareness that her professional goals were incompatible with her project role. Her departure was described as by mutual agreement, and one can assume that both Cynthia and the project benefitted from the decision. New roles in Project Early Start were initiated for Phil and Bud as a result of technical assistance. Although for somewhat different reasons, both expanded their roles to include more time in the classroom.

Technical assistance resulted in the acquisition by staff of new information or knowledge. In Project Early Start, Bud stated that the needs assessment had been a good learning experience for the staff, and he reported that he had learned a great deal as a result of several of

the technical assistance events. In Project Co-Op, staff members who attended the off-site workshop not only gained new information but shared it with their co-workers.

New skills and competencies also resulted from technical assistance. In Project Early Start, according to Matt, Phil's learning and/or exercising of new skills made him more successful in his work with parents.

A better understanding of their project was acquired by Project Early Start's staff members as a result of technical assistance. They began to see the project as a totality, and had a better understanding of its purposes.

Finally, in both cases, technical assistance affected staff attitudes or feelings. Bud believed that Project Early Start's staff were made uncomfortable by their participation in the needs assessment because it was a task for which they were unprepared. Alan Adams, of Project Co-Op, developed a negative attitude toward TADS as a result of the needs assessment, but subsequent technical assistance events and interaction with TADS personnel caused his attitude to become more positive.

Communication. While not a direct target of technical assistance, communication was often a topic of discussion, and impacts were reported in both cases. Both projects changed administrative practices in order to enhance communication. In Project Early Start, the needs assessment was described as having a positive effect upon staff communication. In Project Co-Op, the same process was said to have created problems because the needs assessment identified communication problems among project leadership and staff. As the year progressed, however, Alan

Adams reported a marked improvement in communication.

Program organization and clarification. Staff members of both projects reported that technical assistance had provided greater focus or direction to project activities. In Project Early Start, for example, Bud Fisher stated that as a result of technical assistance he knew where to start working, and that technical assistance had helped the staff identify weaknesses that they could now address.

Program operation. Technical assistance appeared to influence four specific areas of program operation. In Project Early Start, new resources were identified, new activities related to IEP development and services to parents were initiated, and a new product (the assessment instrument) was begun. For both projects, new plans for operation were developed as follow-up activities to the technical assistance they received.

Additional findings. One unanticipated outcome that was apparent in both cases was that the materials and procedures used by TADS were used by the projects as models in their subsequent operation. Bud Fisher used the needs assessment materials and procedures to prepare Project Early Start's continuation proposal. Alan Adams used the same procedures to define Project Co-Op's staff roles. The structure of TADS procedures appears to have been useful to projects in various ways. If imitation is truly a form of flattery, then this is a positive endorsement of TADS' technical assistance.

On a less positive note, technical assistance was described by Alan Adams as creating problems for Project Co-Op. The most frequently cited

example was the identification of communication problems within the project. Labeling this problem during the needs assessment appeared to have a lasting effect, even though communication was reported to have improved during the year. Whether the technical assistance was harmful or beneficial, in terms of serving as a catalyst to successful development, remains to be seen.

Finally, it should not be assumed that the outcomes described here were uniform in nature. Some, such as changes in practice, appeared to affect the entire project. Others were described as minimal or non-existent for the persons or areas in which the technical assistance was delivered. Bud Fisher described no progress in developing a plan for staff development, an area for which technical assistance was provided. Alan Adams described as limited the impact of the off-site training for two of his staff members. Jeff, who had not been involved in the technical assistance to Project Early Start, wasn't sure about its impact. These examples serve to support the philosophy underlying TADS' survey procedures; i.e. that the identification of outcomes or impacts of technical assistance is a two-step process involving the identification of the presence/absence of an impact and then the assessment of its intensity.

from consultation and interpersonal skills to attitude, content-area expertise, and credibility. The TADS coordinators appeared to have several influential characteristics, including interpersonal and coordination skills, responsiveness, and knowledge of the project's purposes and goals.

Event characteristics. The case information regarding the technical assistance events is not as broad or deep as it is for the client and provider characteristics. However, it was possible to identify a number of factors which appeared important, such as structure, communication, consultant/client match, involvement, and scheduling.

Impacts and outcomes. It was difficult to obtain a large quantity of information about technical assistance outcomes for two reasons. First, the focus of the case reports was on clients and providers; second, both projects were in their first year of operation, and outcomes may be more apparent in succeeding years. It was possible, however, to locate outcomes and impacts of technical assistance in the areas of administration, staff, overall communication, focus of program activities, and program operation.

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS		PROVIDER CHARACTERISTICS		
Project Organization	Project Staff	TADS Organization	Consultants	TA Coordinators
Attitude/enthusiasm toward project	Attitude/enthusiasm toward project		Attitude/enthusiasm toward client	Attitude/enthusiasm toward client
Awareness of needs	Knowledge/awareness of project		Knowledge of TADS and HCEEP	Knowledge of the project
Communication practices	Staff communication	Philosophical approach	Consultation skills	Coordination skills
Role/responsibility differentiation	Staff experience and training	Design for providing assistance	Content area expertise and experience	
Expectations for TA	Expectations for TA		Flexibility	Flexibility
Attitude/enthusiasm toward TA			Interpersonal skills	Interpersonal skills
Involvement in TA	Involvement in TA		Preparation for TA	Responsiveness
Leadership style	Work pressure/time availability		Credibility	
Administrative autonomy				

Figure 7. Summary of the case study findings. These are not generalizable results, but, rather, tentative findings that should be subjected to future investigation to determine their validity.

TA EVENT CHARACTERISTICS	OUTCOMES OR AREAS OF IMPACT
Amount of structure	Administration
Communication	Leadership
	Administrative practices
Follow-up	Staff understanding of administration
Involvement	Project staff
Preparation	Staff roles
	Information or knowledge
Relation to stated TA need	Skills and competencies
	Understanding of the project
Relationship/match of consultant and project	Attitudes
	Communication
Scheduling of the event	
	Focus for activities
Type of TA service	
	Program operation
	Identification of resources
	Initiation of new activities
	Product development
	Plan development

Figure 7 (continued). Summary of the case study findings.

SECTION VI

SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS REGARDING THE USE OF CASE REPORTS IN THE STUDY OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROCESS

During this first year of the case study, TADS was interested in several process-oriented questions concerning the conduct and utility of case studies as a procedure for studying technical assistance. Opinions of the process were gathered from TADS staff and observers during the year and as the case study came to a close. Members of the TADS evaluation staff also monitored and considered these questions throughout the year. This section of the report presents a synthesis of information and opinions concerning the following questions:

1. Can the case study method be used to study the technical assistance process?
2. What are some important considerations in developing and conducting a case study?
3. What were the costs of, and problems in, conducting this case study?
4. What were the benefits of conducting this case study?

Question 1: Can the Case Study Method be Used to Study the Technical Assistance Process?

The preliminary answer to this question, based upon this first year of experience, is YES. The case study did not, nor could it, present a complete picture of technical assistance as it was provided to the two cooperating projects. However, it did open a window on the process through which information concerning technical assistance and the factors that influence it could be viewed. The findings described in the previous section of this report testify to the efficacy of the method, as it was implemented for this study, in gathering information about the technical assistance process. Although necessarily limited in scope and breadth, documented information became available as it never had been available

before. Using that information, it was possible to identify, albeit tentatively, a number of apparently important factors which influenced the technical assistance process. In particular, the case descriptions indicated the importance of the characteristics of clients and providers in understanding the technical assistance process.

Question 2: What Are Some Important Considerations in Developing and Conducting a Case Study?

This document has offered a considerable amount of information concerning the development, design, and conduct of a case study. The review of the literature, development of the framework and focus of the study, selection of sites, solicitation of cooperation, and ongoing monitoring of the process are important factors that have been discussed. Here are a number of additional thoughts, insights, and cautions about factors related to developing and conducting large case studies.

The observers. Perhaps the most important single factor in completing a case study is encountered at the very beginning--it is essential to hire persons as observers who can actually deliver the case. They must be sufficiently perceptive, knowledgeable, and organized to be able to observe the activity and describe it thoroughly from a variety of perspectives. The ability to do this is a special gift, and makes the selection of the observer crucial and difficult. The skills of an interviewer, recorder, thinker, speaker, synthesizer, and humanist must be combined in a way that is not common among mortals. Most especially, facility and skill at writing are essential requirements.

The process. It is easy to overlook the fact that much coordination and planning must go into a case study. Or, put another way, the absence of rigor in data collection does not mean an absence of rigor in other areas such as planning and implementation. Careful attention to details, from the selection of observers to scheduling observations to authorization of fees, is essential and time-consuming.

The system and the observer. A case study of technical assistance deals with complex systems; many factors operate at the agency, the project site, and in the provider group. The addition of an observer/recorder to this already complex system adds a new element which must influence the process. The influence of the observer on the system cannot be overlooked and must be openly acknowledged.

The system and the case study. Just as the addition of an observer influences the process, the fact of the case study also plays a role. A heightened awareness of what is said, how it is said, and that it is being recorded, may change interactions. This influence appeared to diminish as the study progressed and everyone became more comfortable; however, a possible "case study effect" must be acknowledged.

Interpersonal relationships. The personal good will of all persons involved in this study was exceptional. It apparently was engendered by a combination of professional and personal attention to all participants by all participants. The human element was important to the process and the observations.

Organizational participation. The professional participation and

enthusiasm of the total TADS and project professional staffs was outstanding, and contributed greatly to the utility and interest of this report. It appears that careful attention to the fostering of group enthusiasm also enhances the entire effort.

Writing the cases. The observers took great care to combine accuracy of reporting, preservation of confidentiality, and fairness to all in writing the cases. This involved creativity and perserverance to change the descriptions of people and places without changing the descriptions of what happened--to whom, when, where, and how. It also involved professional judgment in deciding what information was essential to the study of the technical assistance process and what was extraneous. For these cases, the result of this effort was the projects' acceptance of the case reports and approval of their release, with only minor revisions.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is of great importance to the cooperating projects and to the consultants who provided the technical assistance. Efforts by TADS and the observers to preserve confidentiality have been extensive and continuous. In conducting a case study it is essential to establish and adhere to safeguards to preserve the anonymity of all participants. A compact, or informal contract, among all parties involved to ensure confidentiality would be important in any such endeavor.

Contractual agreements. Letters of agreement to participate in the study were developed early, and the ground rules for confidentiality and approval of the final document were defined. Such agreements must be

developed and put in writing, to be disseminated to all participants. All involved persons must have a clear understanding of the contract so that changes in staff or changes in memory do not adversely affect the case study effort.

Responsibilities and timelines. The case study observers developed a timeline and flow chart of responsibilities for themselves early in the process. This helped TADS to monitor the development of the study. An even more formal schedule of responsibilities, activities, and timelines is in preparation for the next two years of the case study.

Recordkeeping. It is important to establish a systematic process for recording the conduct of the study, its problems and their solutions, to facilitate the writing of the report so that others can learn from the experience.

Question 3: What Were the Costs of, and Problems in, Conducting this Case Study?

For purposes of this discussion, costs are divided into two categories: (a) actual dollar costs for consultant fees, consultant travel, and production of the report; and (b) other types of organizational and professional costs.

Dollar costs. During the contract year, TADS expended $7,280 in consultant fees and travel costs for the study. The consultants were reimbursed for reviewing the literature, developing a framework for the study, meeting with the TADS staff, observing at the project sites, meeting together, and writing the cases and some portions of other

sections of this report. Although final production costs were not available when this report was written, $700 is the estimate to edit, type, and reproduce the preliminary and final drafts of the study.

It is not easy to develop an accurate cost figure for the study in other types of personnel time. Because TADS chose to conduct the study with full participation of any staff members who desired to be involved, varying amounts of time were expended by many individuals in meetings, conversations, interviews, reading of drafts, and reviews of the final draft. In addition, the two TADS authors spent many days working with the observers and writing/editing the report.

Other organizational and professional costs and problems. Other types of costs, or organizational problems, for TADS were evident in several areas:

- ✓ Conducting the case study took more professional and support time and effort than originally anticipated, and occasionally tested the limits of individuals and the organization.
- ✓ The scheduling of technical assistance was affected, to a small degree, by the necessity to fit together all schedules to accomplish the observations.
- ✓ Staff members reported some difficulty avoiding the temptation to generalize from these two cases to all technical assistance.
- ✓ The observations had the potential to be slightly intrusive at the project sites and at TADS.
- ✓ The review and approval of the final document by three groups (TADS, the observers, and the projects) took a considerable amount of professional and calendar time.
- ✓ Some staff members reported difficulty in remaining objective when well-entrenched methods or stances were questioned during the lively discussions.
- ✓ The TADS coordinators may have incurred some "case study effects" as their work received close scrutiny, revealing information that might not otherwise have been highlighted.

Question 4: What Were the Benefits of Conducting This Case Study?

Many benefits to TADS and the TADS staff were noted as the study was conducted. TADS staff members reported a wide variety of organizational and professional benefits. They are reproduced here for the reader's reflection and information, not in any particular order or necessarily of equal weight or value.

- ✓ We now have the first documented portrait of technical assistance as it actually is provided to our clients.
- ✓ The information base concerning technical assistance as provided by TADS has been enriched.
- ✓ Information and insights which had previously been "hunches" about technical assistance processes have been highlighted and, in some cases, confirmed.
- ✓ Important information concerning the clients, the providers, and their interaction is available. This type of information is difficult, if not impossible, to assess with survey evaluation methods.
- ✓ The descriptive, rather than numerical, evaluation feedback caused all staff, to some degree, and some staff to a profound degree, to seriously question and discuss issues concerning technical assistance.
- ✓ The regular feedback and planning sessions have been, somewhat unexpectedly, an excellent formative evaluation tool, eliciting productive staff interaction and, in some cases, causing changes in program activities.
- ✓ The TADS coordinators were provided with "real" evaluation feedback concerning technical assistance, which was more complete and sometimes different from the feedback received from surveys or phone calls.
- ✓ We have gained insights into how project organizational dynamics, usually unknown to us, can and do affect technical assistance.
- ✓ We have more information than was previously available on the complexity of the technical assistance process.
- ✓ A sense of accomplishment is pervasive: "We did it!"

- ✓ We have a sense of work well done. We have closed the first year of the case study with the TADS staff, projects, and observers still enthusiastic and willing to continue the work.
- ✓ New knowledge and new experiences have been gained by each staff member to varying degrees.
- ✓ The insights and information gained from the case study will be professionally useful in studying technical assistance in other ways.
- ✓ A sense of excitement and renewed enthusiasm for doing new things was generated.
- ✓ New relationships and friendships were formed.
- ✓ New or reaffirmed knowledge regarding the spirit and generosity of people was provided.

It is apparent that many benefits, at many levels, were obtained from conducting the case study. Organizationally, professionally, and personally, TADS has gained much from the endeavor.

In Summary

Our questions have been answered, at least in part. The case study method is certainly a useful way to learn about the technical assistance process. A number of organizational, professional, and personal benefits were derived. Costs were also incurred (in addition to the actual dollars spent). The benefits, however, far outweigh the costs at this point.

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